Rashi on Genesis
רש"י על בראשית
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Rashi on Genesis

Chapter 1

Verse 1

בראשית IN THE BEGINNING — Rabbi Isaac said: The Torah which is the Law book of Israel should have commenced with the verse (Exodus 12:2) "This month shall be unto you the first of the months" which is the first commandment given to Israel. What is the reason, then, that it commences with the account of the Creation? Because of the thought expressed in the text (Psalms 111:6) "He declared to His people the strength of His works (i.e. He gave an account of the work of Creation), in order that He might give them the heritage of the nations." For should the peoples of the world say to Israel, "You are robbers, because you took by force the lands of the seven nations of Canaan", Israel may reply to them, "All the earth belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He; He created it and gave it to whom He pleased. When He willed He gave it to them, and when He willed He took it from them and gave it to us" (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 187).
בראשית ברא IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED — This verse calls aloud for explanation in the manner that our Rabbis explained it: God created the world for the sake of the Torah which is called (Proverbs 8:22) "The beginning (ראשית) of His (God's) way", and for the sake of Israel who are called (Jeremiah 2:3) "The beginning (ראשית) of His (God's) increase''. If, however, you wish to explain it in its plain sense, explain it thus: At the beginning of the Creation of heaven and earth when the earth was without form and void and there was darkness, God said, "Let there be light". The text does not intend to point out the order of the acts of Creation — to state that these (heaven and earth) were created first; for if it intended to point this out, it should have written ' בראשונה ברא את השמים וגו "At first God created etc." And for this reason: Because, wherever the word ראשית occurs in Scripture, it is in the construct state. E. g., (Jeremiah 26:1) "In the beginning of (בראשית) the reign of Jehoiakim"; (Genesis 10:10) "The beginning of (ראשית) his kingdom"; (Deuteronomy 18:4) "The first fruit of (ראשית) thy corn." Similarly here you must translate בראשית ברא אלהים as though it read בראשית ברוא, at the beginning of God's creating. A similar grammatical construction (of a noun in construct followed by a verb) is: (Hosea 1:2) תחלת דבר ה' בהושע, which is as much as to say, "At the beginning of God's speaking through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea." Should you, however, insist that it does actually intend to point out that these (heaven and earth) were created

first, and that the meaning is, “At the beginning of everything He created these, admitting therefore that the word בראשית is in the construct state and explaining the omission of a word signifying “everything” by saying that you have texts which are elliptical, omitting a word, as for example (Job 3:10) “Because it shut not up the doors of my mother’s womb” where it does not explicitly explain who it was that closed the womb; and (Isaiah 8:4) “He shall take away the spoil of Samaria” without explaining who shall take it away; and (Amos 6:12) “Doth he plough with oxen," and it does not explicitly state, “Doth a man plough with oxen”; (Isaiah 46:10) “Declaring from the beginning the end,” and it does not explicitly state, “Declaring from the beginning of a thing the end of a thing’ — if it is so (that you assert that this verse intends to point out that heaven and earth were created first), you should be astonished at yourself, because as a matter of fact the waters were created before heaven and earth, for, lo, it is written, (v. 2) “The Spirit of God was hovering on the face of the waters,” and Scripture had not yet disclosed when the creation of the waters took place — consequently you must learn from this that the creation of the waters preceded that of the earth. And a further proof that the heavens and earth were not the first thing created is that the heavens were created from fire (אש) and water (מים), from which it follows that fire and water were in existence before the heavens. Therefore you must admit that the text teaches nothing about the earlier or later sequence of the acts of Creation.
ברא אלהים GOD [AS JUDGE] CREATED — It does not state ברא ה' “The Lord (the Merciful One) created, because at first God intended to create it (the world) to be placed under the attribute (rule) of strict justice, but He realised that the world could not thus endure and therefore gave precedence to Divine Mercy allying it with Divine Justice. It is to this that what is written in (Genesis 2:4) alludes — “In the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven”.

Verse 2

תהו ובהו DESOLATE AND VOID — The word תהו signifies astonishment and amazement, for a person would have been astonished and amazed at its emptiness.
תהו is estordison in old French.
בהו VOID — The word signifies emptiness and empty space.
על פני תהום ON THE FACE OF THE DEEP — i. e. the waters which were upon the earth.
ורוח אלהים מרחפת AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD WAS HOVERING — The throne of Divine Glory was standing in space, hovering over the face of the waters by the breath of the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, and by His command, even as a dove hovers over its nest. In old French acoveter.

Verse 3

Verse 4

ויראא אלהים את האור כי טוב ויבדל AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT THAT IT WAS GOOD, AND GOD CAUSED A DIVISION — Here, also, we must depend upon the statement of the Agada: He saw that the wicked were unworthy of using it (the light); He, therefore, set it apart (ויבדל), reserving it for the righteous in the world to come (Chagigah 12a). But according to the plain sense explain it thus: He saw that it was good, and that it was not seemly that light and darkness should function together in a confused manner. He therefore limited this one’s sphere of activity to the

daytime, and this one's sphere of activity to the nighttime (see Genesis Rabbah 3:6).

Verse 5

יום אחד THE FIRST DAY (literally, one day) — According to the regular mode of expression used in this chapter it should be written here "first day", just as it is written with regard to the other days "the second", "the third", "the fourth". Why, then, does it write אחד "one"? Because the Holy One, blessed be He, was then the Only One (Sole Being) in His Universe, since the angels were not created until the second day. Thus it is explained in Genesis Rabbah (Genesis Rabbah 3:8).

Verse 6

יהי רקיע BE THERE AN EXPANSE — Let the expansion become fixed; for although the heavens were created on the first day, they were still in a fluid form, and they became solidified only on the second day at the dread command (literally, rebuke) of the Holy One, blessed be He, when he said "Let the firmament be stable" (Genesis Rabbah 4:2). It is to this that allusion is made in what is written in (Job 26:11): "The pillars of heaven were trembling" (i. e. they were unstable) — this was during the whole of the first day — and on the second (Job 26:11): "they were astonished at His rebuke", like a man who stands immovable, amazed at the rebuke of one who terrifies him.
בתוך המים IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS — In the exact centre of the waters; because there is the same distance between the upper waters and the firmament as there is between the firmament and the waters that are upon the earth. Thus you may infer that they (the upper waters) are suspended in space by the command of the King (Genesis Rabbah 4:3).

Verse 7

ויעש אלהים את הרקיע AND GOD MADE THE EXPANSE — He put it in proper condition in its place: this is the meaning of "making" it. Similarly (Deuteronomy 21:12) ועשתה את צפרניה "And she shall let grow (literally, make) her nails".
מעל לרקיע ABOVE THE EXPANSE — It is not said here על הרקיע "upon the firmament", but מעל "hanging from above", because they (the waters) were suspended in space (Genesis Rabbah 4:3). Why is it not stated in reference to the work of the second day "that it was good"? Because the work associated with water was not completed until the third day — He only began it on the second — and anything that is not completed is not in a state of perfection and at its best (and so cannot be termed "good"). Therefore on the third day when He completed the work associated with water and another work was commenced and finished, the words כי טוב are repeated, once in reference to the completion of the work of the second day, and again in reference to the completion of the work of that day (Genesis Rabbah 4:10).

Verse 8

ויקרא אלהים לרקיע שמים AND GOD CALLED THE EXPANSE HEAVEN — The word "שמים", Heaven, may be regarded as made up of שא מים "Carry water", or שם מים "There is water", or אש ומים "Fire and water". He mingled fire with water and of them He made the heavens (Chagigah 12a).

Verse 9

יקוו המים THE WATERS SHALL BE DRAWN TOGETHER — For they were then spread over the surface of the whole earth, and He now gathered them together into what now constitutes the Ocean, which is the largest of all seas (Genesis Rabbah 5:2).

Verse 10

קרא ימים CALLED HE SEAS — But does it not form one great sea? But it speaks of seas because the taste of fish which comes up from the sea at Acco is not the same as the taste of fish which comes up from the sea at Aspamia (Genesis Rabbah 5:8).

Verse 11

תדשא הארץ דשא עשב THE EARTH SHALL SPROUT FORTH SPROUTS, HERB — דשא does not mean the same as עשב nor does עשב mean the same as דשא so that it is not a correct expression in Biblical Hebrew to say תעשיב הארץ, for the species of דשא are all different, each by itself being called this or that עשב, and it would not be linguistically correct for a speaker to say this or that דשא, for by דשא is meant that which forms the covering of the ground when it is filled with herbage.
תדשא הארץ THE EARTH SHALL SPROUT FORTH [SPROUTS] — Let it be filled and covered with a garment of different grasses. In old French דשא is called herbaries; English herbage, meaning all species of herbs growing together collectively whilst each root by itself is called an עשב.
— מזריע זרע YIELDING SEED — that its seed should grow within itself, so that some of it may be sown in another spot.
עץ פרי FRUIT TREE — that the taste of the tree be exactly the same as that of the fruit. It did not, however, do this, but (v. 12) "the earth brought forth a tree yielding fruit" and the tree itself was not a fruit; therefore when Adam was cursed on account of his sin, it (the earth) was also visited (because of its sin) and was cursed also (Genesis Rabbah 5:9).
אשר זרעו בו WHOSE SEED IS IN ITSELF — This refers to the kernels of each kind of fruit from which the tree grows when they are planted.

Verse 12

ותוצא הארץ וגו AND THE EARTH BROUGHT FORTH etc. — Although the expression למינהו according to its kind, was not used when the various kinds of herbage were bidden to come forth, they heard that the trees were so commanded and they applied to themselves the argument à fortiore (ק"ו), as it is explained in an Aggadic passage in (Chullin 60a).

Verse 13

Verse 14

יהי מארת BE THERE LUMINARIES — They had been created on the first day, but on the fourth He commanded them to be suspended in the firmament (Chagigah 12a). Indeed, all the productions of heaven and earth were created on the first day, but each of them was put in its place on that day when it was so commanded. In reference to this it is written את השמים (v. 1) In the beginning God created that which was את with the heavens etc., in order to include all the productions of heaven, ואת הארץ to include all its (the earth's) productions (Genesis Rabbah 12:4).
יהי מארת The word is written without the ו after the א (so that it may be read מארת, cursed), because it is a cursed day when children are liable

to suffer from croup. In reference to this we read (in Taanit 27b): On the fourth day of the week they used to fast to avert croup from the children (Yerushalmi Taanit 4:3).
להבדיל בין היום ובין הלילה TO CAUSE A DIVISION BETWEEN THE DAY AND THE NIGHT — This took place after the primeval (divine) light was conserved for the righteous; but during the first seven [another reading is "three"] days of Creation the primeval light and darkness functioned together both by day and by night.
והיו לאותות AND THEY SHALL BE FOR SIGNS — When the heavenly luminaries are eclipsed it is a sign of ill-omen for the world, as it is written, (Jeremiah 10:2) "Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven" — when you carry out the will of the Holy One, blessed be He, you need apprehend no calamity (Sukkah 29a).
ולמועדים AND FOR SEASONS (FESTIVALS) — This is written with a view to the future when Israel would receive command regarding the festivals which would be calculated from the time of the lunar conjunction (Genesis Rabbah 6:1).
ולימים AND FOR DAYS — The sun functions half a day and the moon the other half — together a full day.
ושנים AND FOR YEARS — At the end of three hundred and sixty five days [another version: 365¼] they complete their course through the twelve signs of the Zodiac that attend them, and that is one year [another version: and this makes 365¼ days]; they then begin to revolve a second time in a circle similar to their first cycle.

Verse 15

והיו למאורות AND LET THEM BE FOR LIGHTS — They shall serve also this purpose, namely, to give light to the world.

Verse 16

המאורות הגדולים THE GREAT LUMINARIES — They were created of equal size, but that of the moon was diminished because she complained and said, "It is impossible for two kings to make use of one crown" (Chullin 60b).
ואת הכוכבים AND THE STARS — Because He diminished the moon, He increased its attendant hosts to mollify it (Genesis Rabbah 6:4).

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

נפש חיה LIVING CREATURES — Creatures that shall have vitality.
שרץ Every living creature that does not rise much above the ground is called שרץ, e. g., of winged creatures — flies; of abominable creatures — ants, beetles and worms; of larger creatures — the mole, snail and others of the same kind, and all fishes.

Verse 21

התנינים THE HUGE CREATURES — the large fishes that are in the sea; and according to the statement of the Agada (Bava Batra 74b) it means here the Leviathan and its consort which He created male and female. He, however, killed the female and preserved it in salt for the benefit of the righteous in the time to come, for had they been permitted to be fruitful and to multiply the world could not have endured because of them.
נפש חיה — that have vitality.

Verse 22

ויברך אותם AND HE BLESSED THEM — Because people decreased their number, hunting them and eating them, they needed a blessing (Genesis Rabbah 11:2); it is true that beasts also were in need of a blessing, but on account of the serpent that was to be cursed in the future, He did not bless them, in order that it might not be included in the blessing.
פרו BE FRUITFUL — פרו is of the same root as פרי, and means bring forth fruit.
ורבו AND MULTIPLY — Had He said "Be fruitful" only, one creature might have brought forth a single one, and no more, therefore He added ורבו "and multiply", implying that one should bring forth many.

Verse 23

Verse 24

תוצא הארץ THE EARTH SHALL BRING FORTH — That is what I have explained (v. 14) that all things were created on the first day, and it was only necessary to bring them forth from the ground.
נפש חיה — that have vitality.
ורמש — It means creeping swarms that creep low upon the ground; they appear as though they are dragged along, for how they move is not discernible. What we call רמש and שרץ in our (Hebrew) language, they call in old French mouvoir; English to move.

Verse 25

ויעש AND HE MADE — He formed them with their full volition and in their full stature (Chullin 60a).

Verse 26

נעשה אדם WE WILL MAKE MAN — The meekness of the Holy One, blessed be He, they (the Rabbis) learned from here: because the man is in the likeness of the angels and they might envy him, therefore He took counsel with them (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 18 and see Genesis Rabbah 8). And when He judges the kings He likewise consults His heavenly council, for thus we find in the case of Ahab to whom Micha said, (1 Kings 22:19) "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left." Has God, then, a right hand and a left hand? But it means that some stood on the right side to plead in favour of the accused and others stood on the left side to accuse; and similarly we read (Daniel 4:14), "the matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones", — here, also, He consulted His heavenly council and asked permission of them, saying to them: "There are in the heavens beings after My likeness; if there will not be on earth also beings after My likeness, there will be envy among the beings that I have created" (Sanhedrin 38b).

נעשה אדם WE WILL MAKE MAN — Although they did not assist Him in forming him (the man) and although this use of the plural may give the heretics an occasion to rebel (i. e. to argue in favour of their own views), yet the verse does not refrain from teaching proper conduct and the virtue of humbleness, namely, that the greater should consult, and take permission from the smaller; for had it been written, "I shall make man", we could not, then, have learned that He spoke to His judicial council but to Himself. And as a refutation of the heretics it is written immediately after this verse "And God created the man", and it is not written "and they created" (Genesis Rabbah 8:9)
בצלמנו IN OUR IMAGE — in our type.
כדמתנו AFTER OUR LIKENESS — with the power to comprehend and to discern.
וירדו בדגת הים AND THEY SHALL HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH … [AND OVER THE BEASTS] — The expression וירדו may imply dominion as well as descending — if he is worthy he dominates over the beasts and cattle, if he is not worthy he will sink lower than them, and the beast will rule over him (Genesis Rabbah 8:12).

Verse 27

ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו SO GOD CREATED THE MAN IN HIS IMAGE —in the type that was specially made for him, for everything else was created by a creative fiat, whilst he was brought into existence by a creative act (literally, by hand), as it is said (Psalms 139:5) "And Thou hast laid thy hand upon me." He was made by a seal as a coin that is made by a die that is called in old French coin. It is similarly said, (Job 28:14) "it is changed as clay under the seal" (Sanhedrin 38a).
בצלם אלהים ברא אותו IN THE IMAGE OF GOD CREATED HE HIM — It explains to you that the form prepared for him was the form of the image of his Creator.
זכר ונקבה ברא אותם MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM — And further on (Genesis 2:21) it is said: "and He took one of his ribs etc." (The two passages appear to be contradictory.) But according to a Midrashic explanation, He created him at first with two faces, and afterwards He divided him. But the real sense of the verse is: here it tells you that both of them were created on the sixth day, but it does not explain to you how their creation took place; this it explains to you in another place (Genesis Rabbah 8:1 and see Eruvin 18a).

Verse 28

וכבשה AND SUBDUE IT — The word lacks a ו after the ש so that it may be read as meaning: and subdue her (i. e. the woman), thereby teaching you that the male controls the female in order that she may not become a gad-about; teaching you also that to the man, whose nature is to master, was given the Divine command to have issue, and not to the woman (Yevamot 65b).

Verse 29

ולכל חית הארץ AND TO EVERY BEAST OF THE EARTH — Scripture places cattle and beasts on a level with them (human beings: that is, it places all alike in the same category) with regard to food, and did not permit Adam to kill any creature and eat its flesh, but all alike were to eat herbs. But when the era of the "Sons of Noah" began He permitted them to eat meat, for it is said, (Genesis 9:3) "every moving thing that lives should be for food for yourselves … "even as the herb" that I permitted to the first man, so do "I give to you everything" (Sanhedrin 59b).

Verse 30

Verse 31

יום הששי THE SIXTH DAY — The letter ה, the numerical value of which is 5, is added to the word ששי when the work of Creation was complete, to imply that He made a stipulation with them that it endures only upon condition that Israel should accept the five books of the Torah (Shabbat 88a). Another interpretation of יום הששי THE SIXTH DAY — The whole Creation (the Universe) stood in a state of suspense (moral imperfection) until the sixth day — that is, the sixth day of Sivan which was destined to be the day when the Torah would be given to Israel (Avodah Zara 3a).

Chapter 2

Verse 1

Verse 2

ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD FINISHED — R. Simeon says: A human being (literally, flesh and blood) who cannot know exactly his times and moments (who cannot accurately determine the point of time that marks the division between one period and that which follows it) must needs add from the week-day and observe it as the holy day (the Sabbath), but the Holy One, blessed be He, who knows His times and moments, began it (the seventh day) to a very hair's breadth (with extreme exactness) and it therefore appeared as though He had completed His work on that very day (Genesis Rabbah 10:9). Another explanation: What did the world lack? Rest! Sabbath came — Rest came; and the work was thus finished and completed (Genesis Rabbah 10:9)!

Verse 3

ויברך … ויקדש AND GOD BLESSED … AND HE SANCTIFIED — He blessed it through the Manna, that on all other days of the week there should fall for them (the Israelites) an Omer for each person, whereas on the sixth day there should fall twice as much of that bread. So, too, He sanctified it through the Manna, that it should not fall at all on the Sabbath (Genesis Rabbah 11:2). This verse is written here with reference to what would happen in the future.
אשר ברא אלהים לעשות WHICH GOD IN CREATING HAD MADE — The work which should have been done on the Sabbath He did in the double work which He executed on the sixth day, as it is explained in Genesis Rabbah 11:9.

Verse 4

אלה THESE [ARE THE GENERATIONS] — "These" means those that are mentioned above.
תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם ביום עשות ה' THESE ARE THE PRODUCTIONS OF THE HEAVEN AND OF THE EARTH WHEN THEY WERE CREATED, IN THE DAY THE LORD GOD MADE EARTH AND HEAVEN — The verse teaches you that all of them (the productions of heaven and earth) were created on the first day when God made earth and heaven. Another explanation of the word בהבראם: It may be divided as בראם בה' He created them with the letter ה', as it is said, כי ביה ה' צור עולמים (Isaiah 26:4) "For in Jah, the Lord, is the rock of

worlds", which may be explained to mean (taking צור in sense of Former, Creator) "for by means of ב these two letters ה י of the Divine Name (יהוה) God formed the two worlds" (Menachot 29b), and this verse teaches that this world was created by means of the ה' — a suggestion that all created beings must descend to the nether world "to behold the pit" — the world being like this letter ה', which is closed on all sides but open at the bottom, thus giving a way by which they must descend.

Verse 5

טרם יהיה בארץ WAS NOT YET IN THE EARTH — Wherever טרם occurs in the Scriptures it means "not yet" and does not mean "before". It cannot be made into a verbal form, saying הטרים as one says הקדים (verbal form of קדם) and this passage proves that this is the meaning and not "before" as well as another (Exodus 9:30), כי טרם תראון "that ye do not yet fear the Lord". Therefore you must explain this verse also thus: "No plant of the field was yet in the earth" at the time when the creation of the world was completed on the sixth day before man was created, and וכל עשב השדה טרם יצמח means "and every herb of the field had not yet grown". But as regards the third day of creation about which it is written "The earth brought forth etc." this does not signify that they came forth above the ground but that they remained at the opening of the ground (i. e. just below the surface) until the sixth day (Chullin 60a).
כי לא המטיר BECAUSE GOD HAD NOT CAUSED IT TO RAIN — And what is the reason that God had not caused it to rain? כי אדם אין לעבוד את האדמה BECAUSE THERE WAS NO MAN TO TILL THE GROUND, and there was, therefore, no one to recognize the utility of rain. When Adam came (was created), however, and he realised that it was necessary for the world, he prayed for it and it fell, so that trees and verdure sprang forth.
ה' אלהים THE LORD GOD — The Lord (יהוה) is His Name, whereas אלהים signifies that He is Ruler and Judge over all. This, too, is its meaning, according to the plain sense, wherever it occurs: The Lord who is God (Ruler and Judge).

Verse 6

ואד יעלה AND A MIST WENT UP — This has reference to the creation of Adam: viz., He caused the deep to rise and filled the clouds with water to moisten the dust, and man was created. It is like a kneader of bread who first pours in water and afterwards kneads the dough — similarly here: He first watered the ground and afterwards He formed man (Genesis Rabbah 14:1).

Verse 7

ויייצר AND GOD FORMED — Here the letter yod is written twice to intimate that there were two formations — a formation of man for this world, and a formation of man for resurrection; in the case of animals, however, which will not stand after death for judgment before God the word referring to their formation— ויצר —(Genesis 2:19) is not written with two yods (Midrash Tanchuma, Tazria 1).
עפר מן האדמה DUST OF THE EARTH — He gathered his dust (i. e. that from which he was made) from the entire earth — from its four corners — in order that wherever he might die, it should receive him for burial (Midrash Tanchuma, Pekudei 3). Another explanation: He took his dust from that spot on which the Holy Temple with the altar of atonement was in later times to be built of which it is said, (Exodus 20:24) "An altar of earth thou shalt make for Me" saying, "Would that this sacred earth may be an expiation for him so that he may be able to endure" (Genesis Rabbah 14:8).

ויפח באפיו AND BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS — He made him of both, of earthly and of heavenly matter: the body of the earthly, and the soul of the heavenly. For on the first day were created heaven and earth, on the second, He created the firmament for the heavenly beings, on the third He said, "Let the dry land appear" — for the earthly beings, on the fourth He created the lights for the heavenly beings, on the fifth He said, "Let the waters swarm…" — for the earthly beings. Consequently on the sixth there had to be created a being composed of both, of heavenly and of earthly matter, for otherwise there would have been envy (lack of harmony) among the works of Creation, in that there would have been devoted to one class of them one day more of the Creation than to the others (Genesis Rabbah 12:8).
לנפש חיה A LIVING SOUL — Also cattle and beasts are called נפש חיה (1:20, 22, 24), but the נפש of man is the most highly developed of all of them, because to him was granted understanding and speech.

Verse 8

מקדם EASTWARD — In the east of Eden He planted the garden. Should you say, however, it is already written, (1:27) "and He created the man etc.", then I say that I have seen the Baraitha of R. Eliezer the son of R. José the Galilean, dealing with the thirty two rules of interpretation according to which the Torah (Agada) can be interpreted, and the following is one of them: when a general statement of an action is followed by a detailed account of it, the latter is a particularisation of the former: — "And He created the man" is a general statement, but it does not explicitly state whence he was created and what God did unto him. Now it repeats it and explains these things: "And the Lord God formed man", "and He made to grow for him the garden of Eden", and He caused a deep sleep to fall upon him." He who hears this might think that it is a different account entirely, whereas it is nothing else but the details of the former general statement. Similarly with reference to the cattle the creation of which has been mentioned above (1:27). it resumes and writes, (2:19) "and out of the ground the Lord [God] formed every beast of the field etc.", for the purpose of explaining "and He brought them unto the man to give them names", and also to state that the fowls were created from the swamps.

Verse 9

ויצמח AND HE CAUSED TO GROW — The verse speaks here only with reference to the garden (Genesis Rabbah 13:1)
בתוך הגן IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN — means in the very centre of the garden.

Verse 10

Verse 11

פישון PISHON — This is the Nile, the River of Egypt. Because its waters grow plentiful and rise and water the land, it is called Pishon, the name being of the same root as the verb in (Habakkuk 1:8) ופשו פרשיו "and their horsemen increased"; another interpretation of the name Pishon is: it is so called because it grows flax (פשתן) (Genesis Rabbah 16:2) for it is said with reference to Egypt (Isaiah 19:9) "Moreover they that work in combed flax, shall be ashamed."

Verse 12

Verse 13

גיחון GICHON — It is so called because it flows on with a roar, its roaring being very noisy,—similar in meaning to (Exodus 21:28) וכי יגח "And if an [ox] gore" — for when it gores it rushes on roaring (Berakhot 59b.).

Verse 14

חדקל TIGRIS — It is called חדקל because its waters are pungent in taste (חד) and light in weight (קל) (Berakhot 59b).
פרת EUPHRATES — It is called פרת because its waters grow (פרה) and increase and make men healthy (Berakhot 59b). כוש ואשור CUSH AND ASHUR did not then exist as countries, but Scripture writes with reference to the names which those districts would bear in the future (Ketubot 10b; Genesis Rabbah 16).
קדמת אשור means AT THE EAST OF ASHUR.
הוא פרת IS THE EUPHRATES — the most important of all, being mentioned in connection with the Land of Israel (Genesis Rabbah 16:3).
Este é Prat. O mais importante de todos, mencionado em relação à terra de Yisrael:

Verse 15

ויקח AND HE TOOK — He took him with kind words and induced him to enter (Genesis Rabbah 16:5).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

לא טוב היות וגו' IT IS NOT GOOD etc. — I shall make an help meet for him in order that people may not say that there are two Deities, the Holy One, blessed be He, the only One among the celestial Beings without a mate, and this one (Adam), the only one among the terrestrial beings, without a mate (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 12).
עזר כנגדו A HELP MEET FOR HIM — (כנגדו literally, opposite, opposed to him) If he is worthy she shall be a help to him; if he is unworthy she shall be opposed to him, to fight him (Yevamot 63a).

Verse 19

ויצר מן האדמה NOW OUT OF THE GROUND THE ETERNAL GOD HAD FORMED — The formation spoken of here is the creation mentioned above (1:25) "And God made the beast of the earth etc." and this statement comes (is repeated) here to point out that the fowls were created from the swamps; for above it is said that they were created from the waters and here it states that they were created from the earth. Furthermore it teaches you here that when they were created, immediately — on the very same day — He brought them to Adam to give them names (Chullin 27b); and in the statement of the Agada (Genesis Rabbah 17:4) we are told that this expression יצירה

means domination and subjugation, like (Deuteronomy 20:19) כי תצור אל עיר "when thou shalt besiege a city", for He subjugated them under the power of Adam.
וכל אשר יקרא לו האדם נפש חיה וגו — Invert it (the phrases of the sentence) and then explain it thus: every living creature to which Adam should give a name — that should remain its name forever.

Verse 20

ולאדם לא מצא עזר… ויפל ה' אלהים תרדמה FOR THE MAN HE HAD NOT FOUND A HELP MEET FOR HIM … AND THE ETERNAL GOD CAUSED AN OVERPOWERING SLEEP TO FALL — When He brought them, He brought them before him male and female of each and every kind. Thereupon he said: all these have a mate, but I have no mate! Immediately He caused to fall [an overpowering sleep upon him] (Genesis Rabbah 17:4).

Verse 21

מצלעותיו OF HIS RIBS — The word means of his sides, similar to (Exodus 26:20) ולצלע המשכן "and for the second side of the tabernacle"; this has a bearing upon what they (the Sages) say, (Eruvin 18a): They were created with two faces (sides).
ויסגור AND HE CLOSED UP the place where it was cut (Berakhot 61b).
ויישן ויקח AND HE SLEPT AND then HE TOOK in order that he should not see the piece of flesh out of which she was created, for she might be despised by him (Sanhedrin 39a).

Verse 22

ויבן AND HE FORMED (literally, He built) — as a structure, wide below and narrower above for bearing the child, just as a wheat-store is wide below and narrower above so that its weight should not strain the walls (Berakhot 61a).
ויבן את הצלע לאשה AND HE MADE THE RIB INTO A WOMAN — לאשה means that is should become a woman, like (Judges 8:21) "and Gideon made it לאפוד " i. e., that it should become an ephod.

Verse 23

זאת הפעם THIS NOW — This teaches that Adam endeavoured to find a companion among all cattle and beasts, but found no satisfaction except in Eve (Yevamot 63a).
לזאת יקרא אשה כי מאיש וגו THIS SHALL BE CALLED WOMAN, BECAUSE THIS WAS TAKEN OUT OF MAN — Here we have a kind of play upon words (the words אשה and איש sounding similar): hence we may learn that the language used at the time of the Creation was the Holy Tongue (Hebrew) (Genesis Rabbah 18:4).

Verse 24

על כן יעזב איש THEREFORE A MAN LEAVETH — The Divine Spirit says this, thus prohibiting immoral relationship to the "Sons of Noah" also (Sanhedrin 57b).
לבשר אחד ONE FLESH — Both parents are united in the child.

Verse 25

ולא יתבוששו AND THEY WERE NOT ASHAMED — for they did not know what modestly meant, so as to distinguish between good and evil. Although he (Adam) had been endowed with knowledge to give names to all creatures,

yet the evil inclination did not become an active principle in him until he had eaten of the tree, when it entered into him and he became aware of the difference between good and evil.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

והנחש היה ערום AND THE SERPENT WAS MORE SUBTLE — What connection is there between the following narrative and the statement just made? The latter should have been followed by: "and He [the Lord God] made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them" (3:21), but Scripture informs you with what plan the serpent assailed them: he saw them naked and unashamed and he coveted her (Eve) (Genesis Rabbah 18:6).
ערום מכל MORE SUBTLE THAN ALL — Corresponding with his subtleness and his greatness was his downfall; "more subtle than all" — "more cursed than all" (see 3:14). (Genesis Rabbah 19:1).
אף כי אמר וגו' ALTHOUGH GOD HATH SAID — The meaning is, "Perhaps He has said unto you" לא תאכלו מכל וגו' YE SHALL NOT EAT OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN — And although he saw them eating of the other fruits yet he entered into a long conversation with her so that she should answer him, and so that he might then have an opportunity to talk about that particular tree.

Verse 2

Verse 3

ולא תגעו בו NEITHER SHALL YE TOUCH IT — She added to God's command (which did not forbid touching the tree, but only eating of its fruit) therefore she was led to diminish from it. It is to this that the text refers (Proverbs 30:6): "Add thou not unto His words" (Genesis Rabbah 19:3).

Verse 4

לא מות תמתון YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE — He pushed her until she touched it. He then said to her, "Just as there is no death in touching it, so there is no death in eating it" (Genesis Rabbah 19:3).

Verse 5

כי ידע FOR [GOD] KNOWS — Every artisan detests his fellow-artisans ("Two of a trade never agree"). The serpent suggested to her: God ate of the tree and created the world (Genesis Rabbah 19:4) so if you eat...
והייתם כאלהים YE WILL BE AS GOD — Creators of worlds.

Verse 6

ותרא האשה AND THE WOMAN SAW — She approved the words of the serpent — they pleased her and she believed him (Genesis Rabbah 19:3).
כי טוב העץ THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD to make her become like God.
וכי תאוה היא לעינים AND THAT IT WAS A DELIGHT TO THE EYES — even as he had said to her: "then your eyes shall be opened".
ונחמד להשכיל AND IT WAS TO BE DESIRED TO MAKE ONE WISE — even as he had said to her: "knowing good and evil".

ותתן גם לאשה AND SHE GAVE ALSO TO HER HUSBAND so that she should not die and he remain alive to take another wife (Genesis Rabbah 19:5).
The word גם, also, may be understood to include cattle and beasts (that is, that she gave to these and also to her husband) (Genesis Rabbah 19:5).

Verse 7

ותפקחנה וגו' [AND THE EYES OF BOTH OF THEM] WERE UNCLOSED — Scripture speaks here with reference to intelligence (the mind's eye) and not with reference to actual seeing; the end of the verse proves this for it states,
וידעו כי ערומים הם AND THEY KNEW THAT THEY WERE NAKED — Even a blind person knows when he is naked! What then does "and they knew that they were naked" signify? One charge had been entrusted to them and they now knew they had stripped themselves of it (Genesis Rabbah 19:6).
עלה תאנה FIG LEAVES — This was the tree of which they had eaten; by the very thing through which their ruin had been caused was some improvement effected in their condition (Sanhedrin 70b). The other trees however prevented them from taking of their leaves. And why is not the name of the tree clearly mentioned? Because the Holy One, blessed be He, never wishes to grieve anything He has created: hence its name is not mentioned in order that it might not be put to shame by people saying, "This is the tree through which the world suffered" (Midrash R. Tanchuma 1:4:14).

Verse 8

וישמעו AND THEY HEARD — There are many Midrashic explanations and our Teachers have already collected them in their appropriate places in Genesis Rabbah and in other Midrashim. I, however, am only concerned with the plain sense of Scripture and with such Agadoth that explain the words of Scripture in a manner that fits in with them. וישמעו AND THEY HEARD — What did they hear? They heard the sound of the Holy One, blessed be He, as He walked in the garden (see Genesis Rabbah 19:12).
לרוח היום IN THE WIND OF THE DAY — (רוח is used also in the meaning of direction,— north, east, — etc.) in that direction to which the sun travels (באה לשם) which is the west, for towards evening the sun is in the west, and they committed the sin in the tenth hour (Sanhedrin 38b).

Verse 9

איכה WHERE ART THOU — He knew where he was, but He asked this in order to open up a conversation with him that he should not become confused in his reply, if He were to pronounce punishment against him all of a sudden. Similarly in the case of Cain, He said to him, (4:9) "where is Abel thy brother?" Similarly with Balaam, (Numbers 22:9) "what men are these with thee?" — to open up a conversation with them; so, also, in the case of Hezekiah with reference to the messengers of Merodach-baladan (Isaiah 39:3).

Verse 10

Verse 11

מי הגיד לך WHO TOLD THEE? — Whence has the knowledge come to you what shame there is in standing naked?
המן העץ HAST THOU EATEN OF THE TREE — The ' ה of the word המן expresses a question.

Verse 12

אשר נתת עמדי WHOM THOU GAVEST TO BE WITH ME — Here he showed his ingratitude (Avodah Zarah 5b).

Verse 13

השיאני means HE DECEIVED ME; — we find the word in the same meaning in (2 Chronicles 32:15), "Now therefore let not Hezekiah beguile you" (Genesis Rabbah 19).

Verse 14

כי עשית זאת BECAUSE THOU HAST DONE THIS — From here we infer that we should not occupy ourselves with what may be in favour of one who seduces people to idolatry, for had He asked it, "Why hast thou done this?", it could have answered Him, "When the words of the teacher and those of the pupil are contradictory, whose orders should be obeyed?" (Sanhedrin 29a). (i. e. if You told them one thing and I another, should they not have obeyed You?).
מכל הבהמה ומכל חית השדה FROM AMONG (or, MORE THAN) ALL CATTLE AND ALL THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD — If it was cursed more than the cattle whose period of gestation is longer than that of beasts does it not necessarily follow that it was cursed more than the beasts? Our Rabbis have definitely established the correctness of the following deduction in treatise Bekhorot 8a, that it (viz., the use of these apparently superfluous words "and more than all the beasts of the field") teaches that the period of gestation of the serpent is seven years.
על גחנך תלך UPON THY BELLY SHALT THOU GO — It had feet but they were cut off (Genesis Rabbah 20:5).

Verse 15

ואיבה אשית AND I WILL SET ENMITY — Your sole intention was that Adam should die by eating it first and that you should then take Eve for yourself (Genesis Rabbah 20:5), and you came to speak to Eve first only because women are easily influenced and know how to influence their husbands; therefore "I shall put enmity [between thee and the woman]".
הוא ישופך HE WILL BRUISE (or, POUND) THEE— Like (Deuteronomy 9:21), "And I beat in pieces" which Onkelos translates by ושפית "I pounded it."
ואתה תשופנו עקב AND THOU SHALT BRUISE HIS HEEL — As you will have no height (not stand erect) you will be able to bite him only on the heel, but even at that spot you will kill him. The word תשופנו is of the same import as the verb in (Isaiah 40:24). נשף בהם "It bloweth upon them." When a serpent comes to bite, it blows with a kind of hissing sound. Although the words ישופך and תשופנו have different meanings, since they constitute "a play upon words" by sounding similar, they are both used here.

Verse 16

עצבונך THY PAIN — viz., the trouble of rearing children (Eruvin 100b).
והרונך AND THY CONCEPTION— viz., the pain of pregnancy.
בעצב תלדי בנים IN PAIN THOU SHALT BEAR CHILDREN — This refers to the pangs of childbirth (Eruvin 100b).
ואל אישך תשוקתך AND TO YOUR HUSBAND WILL BE YOUR DESIRE — for sexual relations. And, nonetheless, you will not have the temerity to proposition him with [your] mouth, but rather HE WILL RULE OVER YOU — everything will come from him and not from you.

תשוקתך THY DESIRE — Similar to (Isaiah 29:8), ונפשו שוקקה "and his soul hath appetite", (desires).

Verse 17

ארורה האדמה בעבורך CURSED BE THE GROUND FOR THY SAKE — It will produce to you cursed objects such as flies, fleas and ants; it may be compared to the case of one who gets into depraved ways, and people curse the breasts at which he was suckled (Genesis Rabbah 5:9).

Verse 18

וקוץ ודרדר תצמיח לך THORNS ALSO AND THISTLES SHALL IT BRING FORTH TO THEE— תצמיח has for subject the earth; when you sow it with various kinds of grain, it shall bring forth thorns and thistles — artichokes and cardoon — which are fit for food only after special preparation (Genesis Rabbah 20:10).
ואכלת את עשב השדה AND THOU SHALT EAT THE HERB OF THE FIELD — What curse is involved here? Was he not told as a blessing, (1:29) "Behold I have given unto you every herb yielding seed"? But what is stated here at the beginning of this passage? "Cursed be the ground etc.… in toil shalt thou eat of it." And after all your toil "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee". This means when you sow it with cereals and vegetables it shall bring forth for you thorns and thistles and other weeds, and you will perforce have to eat them for lack of other food (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 14).

Verse 19

בזעת אפיך IN THE SWEAT OF THY FACE — after you have taken all this great trouble.

Verse 20

ויקרא האדם AND THE MAN CALLED — Scripture now reverts to its previous topic (Genesis 2:20) beginning with "and the man gave names". It broke it off (that is, interpolated the story of the serpent) only to tell you that through the giving of names Eve became his mate, as it is written (Genesis 2:20) "but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him," and that therefore "the [Lord God] caused to fall a deep sleep upon him" and formed Eve. But because Scripture writes at the end of the story of creation of Eve (Genesis 5:25), "and they were both naked", it therefore follows on with the passage dealing with the serpent, to inform you that because he saw her nakedness and that they displayed no feeling of shame in their actions, he desired her, and he came upon them with his evil plan and with deceit.
חוה EVE — חוה has the same sound as חיה (and similar meaning "life") — she was so called because she gives life (birth) to her children; the interchange of י and ו is similar to that in (Ecclesiastes 2:22), מה הוה לאדם "for what hath a man", where הוה is used in the sense of היה "to be."

Verse 21

כתנות עור GARMENTS FOR THE SKIN — There are Agadoth which say that they were smooth as fingernails, cleaving to their skin; whereas some say that they were made of material that comes from skin, as for example, the hair of hares which is soft and warm, and of this He made garments for them (Genesis Rabbah 20:12).

Verse 22

היה כאחד ממנו IS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US (or, like the Being who is One, Unique amongst us) — Lo, he is unique among the terrestrial ones, even as I am unique among the celestial ones. And in what does his uniqueness consist? In knowing good and evil, which is not so in the case of cattle and beasts (Genesis Rabbah 21:5).
ועתה פן ישלח ידו AND NOW, LEST HE PUT FORTH HIS HAND… [AND EAT AND LIVE FOR EVER] — And if he does live forever he is likely to lead people astray, so that they may say, "He, also, is a god"; there are also Agadic Midrashim, but they are not in keeping with its (the verse's) plain sense.

Verse 23

Verse 24

מקדם לגן עדן AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN — Not in the eastern part of the Garden but eastward of the garden of Eden and outside the garden.
את הכרבים THE CHERUBIM — Angels of destruction (Exodus Rabbah 9:11).
החרב המתהפכת THE SWORD TURNING ITSELF — It was a revolving sword and consequently had a להט, a flashing flame for the purpose of frightening him so that he should not enter again into the garden. The Targum of להט, however, is שנן, like (Sanhedrin 82a) שלף שננא he drew his blade; old French lame. There are Agadic Midrashim, but I come only to explain it according to its plain sense.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

(1) והאדם ידע AND THE MAN KNEW already before the events related above took place — before he sinned and was driven out of the Garden of Eden. So, also, the conception and birth of Cain took place before this. Had it been written, וידע אדם it would imply that after he was driven out children were born to him (Genesis Rabbah 22:2).
קין — She called him so with reference to her use of the word.
את קנית; — ה' is like עם ה' "with the Lord"; she meant to say: when He created me and my husband He created us by Himself, but in the case of this one we are copartners with Him (cf. Niddah 31a).
את קין…את אחיו את הבל —The threefold 'את' signify extension of the scope of the text, teaching that a twin sister was born with Cain, and that with Abel two were born; consequently the text states ותוסף "and she bore more'' than the previous time (Genesis Rabbah 22:3).

Verse 2

רעה צאן A FEEDER OF FLOCKS — Because the earth had been cursed he refrained from cultivating it.

Verse 3

מפרי האדמה OF THE FRUIT OF THE GROUND —of the worst fruits (Genesis Rabbah 22:5); there is an Agada which says that it was linseed (Midrash Tanchuma, Bereshit 9).

Verse 4

וישע AND HE HAD REGARD— and He turned to; similarly in the next verse "He had no respect for his offering" means, "He did not turn to it." Similarly, (Isaiah 17:8) ולא ישעה אל המזבחות which means "And he shall not turn towards the altars"; so also (Job 14:6) שעה מעליו "turn away from him" — disregard him.
וישע AND HE HAD REGARD — Fire descended from heaven and consumed his offering.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

הלא אם תטיב IF THOU MENDEST — Its meaning is as the Targum gives it: "if thou wilt improve thy doings, thou shalt be forgiven".
לפתח חטאת רובץ SIN CROUCHETH AT THE ENTRANCE — Right up to the door of your grave (until your death) your sin will be preserved.
ואליך תשוקתו AND UNTO THEE IS ITS LONGING — The longing of sin; it refers to the evil inclination. This is continually longing and desiring to make you sin.
ואתה תמשול בו NEVERTHELESS THOU MAYEST RULE OVER IT — If you desire to, you can gain the victory over it (Kiddushin 30b).

Verse 8

ויאמר קין אל הבל AND CAIN SPAKE TO ABEL — He began an argument, striving and contending with him, to seek a pretext to kill him. There are Midrashic explanations of these words, but this is the plain sense of the text.

Verse 9

איה הבל אחיך WHERE IS ABEL THY BROTHER — thus entering into a friendly conversation with him: perhaps he might repent and say, "I have killed him, and sinned against You" (Genesis Rabbah 19:11).
לא ידעתי I KNOW NOT — He became a deceiver of the Most High (i. e. he persuaded himself that he could deceive Him) (Numbers Rabbah 20:6).
השומר אחי אנכי AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER — This is a question. Similarly, wherever ה' has a חטף פתח it introduces a question.

Verse 10

דמי אחיך THY BROTHERS BLOOD — דמי is plural — bloods" — his blood and the blood of his possible descendants (Genesis Rabbah 22:9). Another explanation of why the plural is used: he inflicted upon him many wounds, because he knew not whence his soul would depart (i. e. which blow would prove fatal) (Sanhedrin 37b).

Verse 11

ארור אתה מן האדמה CURSED BE THOU FROM THE GROUND or, MORE THAN THE GROUND — More than the ground has already been cursed on account of its sin (cf. Rashi on Genesis 1:11): in this, too, it has again sinned

אשר פצתה את פיה לקחת את דמי אחיך IN THAT IT HATH OPENED ITS MOUTH TO TAKE THY BROTHER'S BLOOD: therefore do I impose upon it an additional curse regarding you—"it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength".

Verse 12

נע ונד A VAGABOND AND A WANDERER — You shall not be permitted to dwell in one place.

Verse 13

גדול עוני מנשוא MY PUNISHMENT IS GREATER THAN I CAN BEAR (literally, my sin is greater than what can be borne) — This is a question: You bear the worlds above and below. and is it impossible for You to bear my sin? (Genesis Rabbah 22:11).

Verse 14

Verse 15

לכן כל הרג קין VERILY, WHOSOEVER SLAYETH CAIN — This is one of the verses where the construction is elliptical (literally, which abbreviate their statements), which give only a suggestion and do not fully explain. "Verily, whosoever slayeth Cain" express a threat, suggesting the consequence — "thus shall be done to him", "thus and thus shall be his punishment", without explicitly explaining what the punishment would be.
שבעתים יקם VENGEANCE SHALL BE TAKEN SEVENFOLD — God says, I do not wish to take vengeance on Cain now, but at the end of seven generations I will execute my vengeance upon him, that Lamech, one of his descendants, will arise and slay him. The end of this verse which states, "vengeance shall be taken in the seventh generation" — which is the vengeance taken on Cain for Abel — teaches us that the first part of the verse is a threat made in order that no creature might injure him. A similar elliptical expression is the following: (2 Samuel 5:8) "And David said, whosoever smiteth the Jebusites and getteth up to the gutter" — but it does not explicitly state what would be done to that person. Scripture, however, here speaks by a suggestion only, meaning, whosoever smiteth the Jebusites and getteth up to the gutter and approacheth the gate and conquereth it and the blind etc. … slaying also them (the blind and the lame) because they said, "there are the blind and the lame: David cannot come into the house" — he who smiteth these, I shall make him chief and captain. Here (in the Book of Samuel) it abridges the narrative, but in Chronicles (1 Chronicles 11:6) it explicitly states, "he shall become chief and captain."
וישם ה' לקין אות AND THE LORD SET A SIGN FOR CAIN — He inscribed on his forehead a letter of His Divine Name (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 21). Other editions of Rashi add the following: another interpretation of "Whoever will find me will slay me": this refers to cattle and beasts, since there were then no human beings in the world of whom he might be afraid except his father and mother, and, of course, he did not fear that they would slay him. He, therefore, said, "Until now the fear of me was upon all animals — as it is written", (Genesis 9:2) "And the fear of you shall be upon all beasts of the field" etc. — now, however, because of my sin the animals will no longer fear me and will kill me. God immediately set a sign for Cain, viz., he again made the animals be in fear of him.

Verse 16

ויצא קין AND CAIN WENT AWAY — He went away in pretended humility as though he would deceive the Most High (Genesis Rabbah 22:13).
בארץ נוד IN THE LAND OF NOD — In the land where all exiles wander about.
קדמת עדן ON THE EAST OF EDEN — Thereto his father went into exile when he was driven out from the Garden of Eden. as it is said, (3:24) "And He placed in the east of the Garden of Eden" a watch on the road that leads to the entrance of the Garden, from which one may infer that Adam was there (in the East) (Genesis Rabbah 21:9). Indeed, we find, also, that the Eastern quarter always forms a place of refuge for murderers, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 4:41) "Then Moses set aside three cities of refuge towards the place of sun-rise [that a murderer might flee thither]."
Another explanation of בארץ נוד IN THE LAND OF NOD — (taking נוד in the sense of "movement") — wherever he went the earth quaked beneath him, and people said, "Turn away from him: this is the man who killed his brother" (Midrash Tanchuma, Bereshit 9).

Verse 17

ויהי AND HE WAS— Cain was, not Enoch — בונה עיר BUILDING A CITY ויקרא שם העיר AND HE CALLED THE NAME OF THE CITY (named the city) as a memorial of his son — חנוך.

Verse 18

חנוך AND IRAD BEGET — There are passages where it says of the male הוליד, and there are places where it says ילד, because this root ילד is used in two senses: in reference to a woman giving birth to a child through the agency of a male old French naitre; English to give birth to and the act of begetting by a man old French engendrer; English engender, beget. When it says הוליד, [in the Hiphil form] it speaks of the man in his relation to the act of giving birth by the woman — this or that man caused his wife to give birth to a son or daughter; when it says ילד it refers to the act of begetting by the man himself.

Verse 19

ויקח לו למך AND LAMECH TOOK UNTO HIMSELF — It would not have been necessary to state all this in detail except to inform us by the conclusion of the narrative that the Holy One, blessed be He, kept the promise He made when He said, שבעתים יקם קין "vengeance shall be taken of Cain after seven generations"; for Lamech arose after he had begotten children and had raised the seventh generation and killed Cain. It is to this that the statement refers: כי איש הרגתי לפצעי וגו "for I have slain a man to my wounding etc." (v. 23).
שתי נשים TWO WIVES — This was the custom of the generation that lived before the time of the Flood; they had two wives, one for child-bearing, the other for frivolous companionship and charm; the latter was given a cup of some drug to drink in order that she might become barren, and was dressed up like a bride and fed with the best food, whilst her fellow-wife was left without her husband's companionship and ever mourned like a widow. Job expressly mentions this (Job 24:21). "He is a companion to (or, he feedeth) the barren that beareth not, and does not good to the widow", as it is explained in the Agada of Pereq Chelek (see also Genesis Rabbah 23:2).
עדה ADAH — She was the wife intended for propagation, and she was so named because she was repulsive to him and was kept aloof from him [other versions read "from his table "] for עדה is the Aramaic word for סורה kept aloof."

צלה ZILLAH — She was the one for companionship alone, and she was so named because she always abided in his shadow (צל means "shadow"). Thus is the statement of the Agada in Genesis Rabbah 23:2).

Verse 20

אבי יושב אהל ומקנה THE FATHER OF SUCH AS ABIDE IN TENTS AND OF SUCH THAT HAVE CATTLE — He was the first of those who pastured cattle, and he dwelt in tents, a month here and a month there, on account of the pasture necessary for his sheep; for when the grass was finished in one place he went away and pitched his tent in another place. There is a Midrashic statement (Genesis Rabbah 23:3) that he built temples for idol worship, (for ומקנה may be read ומקנה -- provoking jealousy), just as you say, (Ezekiel 8:3) "the image of jealousy which provoketh God to jealousy" (המקנה); similarly his brother handled the harp and guitar to make music for idol worship.

Verse 21

Verse 22

תובל קין TUBAL-CAIN — He refined Cain's handicraft. The word תובל is connected in meaning with תבלין (spices which give a refined and improved taste to food); he refined and improved the work of Cain by providing weapons for murderers (Genesis Rabbah 23:3).
לטש כל חרש נחשת וברזל THE FORGER OF EVERY CUTTING INSTRUMENT OF BRASS AND IRON — He sharpened tools used in brass and iron work; לוטש has the some meaning as (Job 16:9) ילטוש "He sharpeneth his eye upon me." The word חרש is not of the form פעל (a noun like אֹכֶל, אֹהֶל etc.), but of the form פועל (a participle), for it has the vowel קמץ קטן (what we term צירה) and its accent is on the last syllabic (whereas the noun form has the accent on the first syllable, and the second has a Segol, like קדש), and the meaning is that he sharpened and polished all cutting implements (כל חרש) used in work of brass and iron.
נעמה NAAMAH — She was Noah's wife (Genesis Rabbah 23:3).

Verse 23

שמען קולי HEAR MY VOICE — For his wives separated from him because he had killed Cain and Tubal-Cain, his own son. Lamech was blind and Tubal-Cain used to lead him. The latter saw Cain and thought him to be an animal. He therefore told his father to draw the bow, and thus Lamech killed him. As soon as he learned that it was his forefather Cain, he smote his hands together, struck his son between them and so killed him too. His wives thereupon separated from him, and he endeavoured to appease them, saying שמען קולי "Hear my voice"— obey me and return to me: for the man I slew — was he slain by my wounding? i. e. did I wound him with premeditation, that the wound should be called by my name (i. e. attributed to me); and the child that I slew — was it slain by my blow? (i. e. by a blow directed intentionally by me?) [Rashi here inserts the word בתמיה which he uses frequently to direct that the preceding words should be read as a question.] Did I not act inadvertently and not with premeditation? This was not my wound, nor was this my blow!
פצע wound, is the stroke inflicted by a sword or arrow (old French macheure).

Verse 24

כי שבעתים יקם קין IF CAIN SHALL BE AVENGED SEVENFOLD — (according to Rashi, as previously explained, it signifies "If vengeance shall be taken on Cain after seven generations"). If in the case of Cain who killed with premeditation the punishment was suspended for him until the seventh generation, in the case of myself who slew inadvertently does it not necessarily follow that it should be suspended for me until many seven generations?
שבעים ושבעה SEVENTY AND SEVEN — He uses a term that denotes many periods of seven generations. Thus did R. Tanchuma 1:1:11 explain this passage; but the Midrash Rabbah (Genesis Rabbah 23:4) does not mention that Lamech slew anyone at all, and only states that his wives had lived apart from him after they had born children, because God's decree had been issued that Cain's descendants should be exterminated after seven generations. They said, "Why should we bear children only to be destroyed? Soon the Flood will come and will sweep everyone away!" Lamech then said unto them, "Did 'I' slay a man 'לפצע for my wounding" (i.e. that I should be wounded — punished)? Did "I" slay Abel who was a man in height but a child in years, that my descendants should be exterminated on account of this sin (the sin of Cain who killed Abel)? If Cain who did kill had his punishment suspended until the seventh generation, I who have not killed — does it not necessarily follow that my punishment) should be suspended for many seven generations? This, however, is an absurd argument a fortiori, for if so, the Holy One, blessed be He, could never exact his debt nor fulfil his word.

Verse 25

וידע אדם AND ADAM KNEW — Lamech came to Adam Harishon, complaining about his wives. He (Adam) said to them: "Is it for you to be overparticular regarding God's decrees? You do your duty, and He will do His!" They replied to him: "First correct yourself: have you not lived apart from your wife these 130 years, ever since, through you, death was decreed as a punishment?" At once 'וידע אדם עוד וגו "Adam knew his wife עוד " — What signifies the word עוד? It is used here to teach that his love for her was now greater than before (Genesis Rabbah 23:4-5).

Verse 26

אז הוחל THEN IT WAS BEGUN [TO CALL etc.] — The word הוחל must be connected in meaning with חולין "profane matters ") viz, calling the names of men and the names of idols after the name of the Holy One, blessed be He — making them the objects of idolatrous worship and calling them Deities (Genesis Rabbah 23:7).

Chapter 5

Verse 1

זה ספר תולדות אדם THIS IS THE BOOK OF THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM — This is the record (or, enumeration) of the generations of Adam. There are however, many Midrashic observations on this verse
'ביום ברא וגו IN THE DAY THAT [GOD] CREATED etc. — This states that on the day when he was created he begot progeny (Genesis Rabbah 24:7).

Verse 2

Verse 3

שלשים ומאת שנה A HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS — Until then he lived apart from his wife (Genesis Rabbah 24:6).

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

וימת חנוך AND ENOCH WALKED [WITH GOD] — He was a righteous man, but his mind was easily induced) to turn from his righteous ways and to become wicked. The Holy One, blessed be He, therefore took him away quickly and made him die before his full time. This is why Scripture uses a different expression when referring to his death by writing ואיננו "and he was not", meaning, he was not in the world to complete the number of his years.
כי לקח אותו FOR GOD TOOK HIM — before his time; a similar meaning of לקח "to take" we find in (Ezekiel 24:16), "I take away from thee the desire of thine eves [by a plague]".

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

ויולד בן AND HE BEGOT A SON (בן "son", connected with the root בנה ''to build") — from whom the world was built up (peopled) (Tanchuma 1:1:11)

Verse 29

זה ינחמנו THIS WILL COMFORT US — He will ease from off us (ינחמנו) the toil of our hands. For until Noah came people had no agricultural instruments and he prepared such for them. The earth had brought forth

thorns and thistles when they sowed wheat in consequence of the curse imposed upon Adam Harishon: in the days of Noah, however, this ceased (Tanchuma 1:1:11). This is what is meant by the word ינחמנו (viz., ינ מנו). If, however, you do not explain it in this manner, but from the root נחם "to comfort", then the meaning you give to this expression (connecting it with the idea of "comfort") will have no application to the name נ, and you would have to call him מנחם "Comforter".

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

בן חמש מאות שנה FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OLD — R. Judan said: "How is it that all the previous generations had children at the age of hundred years and this one (Noah) at the age of 500 years? The Holy One, blessed be He, said, "If they (Noah's children) be wicked, they will perish by the water of the Flood and it will grieve this righteous man; if they be righteous, I shall have to trouble him to construct several arks." He therefore restrained him from having children until he was 500 years old, in order that Japhet, the oldest of his sons (cf. Rashi on Genesis 10:21) should not reach the punishable age before the Flood. For it is written (Isaiah 65:20), "For as a lad shall one die when he is one hundred years old", meaning, that in the future time, he will only then be of punishable age, and this was so, too, before the giving of the Torah (Genesis Rabbah 26:2).
את שם ואת חם ואת יפת SHEM, HAM AND JAPHETH — But was not Japheth the eldest? But you naturally first interest yourself in Shem who was a righteous man, who was born circumcised (a sign of righteousness) and from whom Abraham was to descend (Genesis Rabbah 26:3).

Chapter 6

Verse 1

Verse 2

בני האלהים THE SONS OF ELOHIM — The sons of princes and rulers (Genesis Rabbah 26:15). Another explanation of בני האלהים is that these were princely angels who came as messengers from God: they, too, intermingled with them (the daughters of men). Wherever the word אלהים occurs in the Scriptures it signifies authority, and the following passages prove this: (Exodus 4:16) "and thou shalt be his (אלהים) master", and (Exodus 7:1) "See, I have made the (אלהים) a master."
כי טבת הנה THAT THEY WERE FAIR — Rabbi Judan said, "It is written here טבת, for when they were being made to appear "good" by being decked out to be taken beneath the marriage canopy one of the lords would come and carry her off first (Genesis Rabbah 26:5).
מכל אשר בחרו OF ALL WHOM THEY CHOOSE — even if it were a married woman or a man or an animal (Genesis Rabbah 26:5).

Verse 3

לא ידון רוחי באדם MY SPIRIT SHALL NOT STRIVE AGAINST MAN — My Spirit shall not be in a state of discontent and shall not strive with Myself because of man.
לעולם ALWAYS — for a long time. Behold, My Spirit has been contending within Me whether to destroy or whether to show mercy: such contending (deliberation) shall not be forever — meaning, for a long time.
בשגם הוא בשר FOR THAT HE ALSO IS FLESH — This is the same as בְּשָׁגַם — that is to say: because this quality is also in him viz., that he is only flesh, and yet he does not humble himself before Me; what would he do if he were of fire or of some other resisting matter! Similarly we find שָׁ for שָׁ, (Judges 5:7) עד שָׁקַמְתִּי דבורה "Until I Deborah arose", where it is the same as שָׁקַמְתִּי; so also (Judges 6:17) שָׁאַתָּה מדבר עמי "that it is thou who talkest with me", where it is the same as שָׁאַתָּה — so also here.
והיו ימיו וגו THEREFORE HIS DAYS SHALL BE etc. — For 120 years I will be long-suffering with them, and if they repent not I shall bring a flood upon them. If, now, you object, saying that from the birth of Japheth until the Flood there were only 100 years, remember that there is no "earlier" or "later" in the Torah (events are not always related in chronological order) (Pesachim 6b): the decree (regarding the Flood) was issued twenty years before Noah had any children — so we find in Seder Olam. There are many Midrashic explanations of the words לא ידון but this is transparently its plain sense.

Verse 4

הנפילים THE GIANTS — Thy were called נפילים because they fell (נפלו) and caused the downfall of (הפילו) the world (Genesis Rabbah 26:7).
In Hebrew the giants are usually called ענקים.בימים ההם IN THOSE DAYS — In the days of the generations of Enosh and the sons of Cain (Genesis Rabbah 26:7).
וגם אחרי כן AND ALSO AFTER THAT — Although they witnessed the destruction of the generation of Enosh when the Ocean rose and flooded a third part of the world, yet the generation of the Flood did not humble itself and take a lesson from them (Genesis Rabbah 26).
אשר יבאו WHEN [THE SONS OF GOD] CAME IN, they (the women) bore children, giants like them (the fathers) (Genesis Rabbah 26:7).
הגבורים MIGHTY — in rebellion against God.
אנשי שם MEN OF RENOWN (literally, men of name) — Men who bore distinctive names: עירד, מחויאל, מתושאל being so named because these names have reference to their destruction, for they were wiped out and torn out from the world (מחוי-אל would signify "wiped-out-by-God", מתושאל "Torn-out-by-God). Another explanation is that they were men of devastation (אנשי שם-מון) — who devastated the world (Genesis Rabbah 26:7).

Verse 5

Verse 6

וינחם ה' כי עשה AND THE LORD REPENTED THAT HE HAD MADE — (The first word is connected with that which means "comfort") It was a consolation to Him that He had created man on earth, for had he been one of the heavenly beings he would have incited them also to rebel against God (Genesis Rabbah 27:4).
ויתעצב GRIEVED HIM — means, in the mind of God man became an object to be troubled (punished): it entered God's heart to grieve him. This is how the Targum of Onkelos understands the verse. Another explanation of verse

6: וינחם AND [THE LORD] REPENTED — The thoughts of God turned from Divine mercy to Divine justice: He considered what to do with man whom He had made on the earth. Wherever this term is used in the Scripture it means "considering what to do". Examples are: (Numbers 18:19) "nor the son of man that He should consider (ויתנחם)"; (Deuteronomy 32:36) "and reconsider (ויתנחם) regarding His servants"; (Exodus 32:14) "and the Lord reconsidered (וינחם) regarding the evil"; (1 Samuel 15:2) "I am reconsidering (נחמתי) that I have set up Saul to be king" — all these passages denote a change of mind.
ויתעצב אל לבו AND IT GRIEVED HIM AT HIS HEART— He mourned at the failure of His handiwork. Similarly (2 Samuel 19:3) 'The king grieved (נעצב) for his son". (Similarly here: God grieved for his (man's) heart: that it had changed from good to bad). The following extract from the Midrash Rabbah I am writing in order that you may know how to refute the arguments of certain heretics: A gentile once asked Rabbi Joshua, the son of Korcha, saying to him, "Do you not admit that the Holy One, blessed be He, knows what is to happen in the future?" He replied, "Yes." The gentile retorted, "But is it not written 'and He was grieved in His heart'?" He answered: "Have you ever had a son born to you?" The reply was "Yes." He asked (the gentile): "And what did you do?" He replied: "I rejoiced and I made others rejoice also." The Rabbi asked him: "But did you not know that he must die?" The heathen replied: "At the time of joy, let there be joy, at the time of mourning let there be mourning". The Rabbi then said: "Such, too, is the way of the Holy One, blessed be He: although it was clear to Him that in the end men would sin and would be destroyed, He did not refrain from creating them for the sake of the righteous men who were to issue from them" (Genesis Rabbah 27:4).

Verse 7

ויאמר ה' אמחה את האדם AND GOD SAID I WILL BLOT OUT THE MAN — He is dust and I shall bring water upon him and blot him out: that is why this root מחה is used (it expresses the idea of sponging out by means of wet or dampness) (Genesis Rabbah 28:2).
מאדם ועד בהמה — FROM MAN, TO BEAST — These also corrupted their way (Genesis Rabbah 28:8). Another explanation is: All things were created on man's account; when he ceases to be, what need of them? (Sanhedrin 108a) כי נחמתי כי עשיתים means for I have thought out what to do because I have made them. (Cf. this with Rashi's second explanation of 5:6 וינחם).

Verse 8

Verse 9

אלה תולדת נח נח איש צדיק THESE ARE THE PROGENY OF NOAH: NOAH WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN — Since the text mentions him it sings his praise, in accordance with what is said, (Proverbs 10:7) "The mention of the righteous shall be for a blessing." Another explanation is: since after stating "These are the progeny of Noah", it does not at once mention the names of his children but declares that he "was a righteous man", Scripture thereby teaches you that the real progeny of righteous people are their good deeds (Genesis Rabbah 30:6).
בדורותיו IN HIS GENERATIONS — Some of our Rabbis explain it (this word) to his credit: he was righteous even in his generation; it follows that had he lived in a generation of righteous people he would have been even more righteous owing to the force of good example. Others, however, explain it to his discredit: in comparison with his own generation he was

accounted righteous, but had he lived in the generation of Abraham he would have been accounted as of no importance (cf. Sanhedrin 108a).
את האלהים התהלך נח NOAH WALKED WITH GOD — In the case of Abraham Scripture says, (Genesis 24:40) ''[God] before whom I walked"; Noah needed God's support to uphold him in righteousness, Abraham drew his moral strength from himself and walked in his righteousness by his own effort (Genesis Rabbah 30:10).
התהלך HE WALKED — This word is in the past tense. The following is the usage of this verbal form: in the "heavy" (כבד) conjugation one grammatical form is used both as future (i. e. the imperative, since the imperative calls for on action to be done in the future relative to the time when the command is given) and as past tense e. g., (13:17) קום התהלך "arise walk" is future (i. e. imperative); נח התהלך "Noah walked" (in this passage) is past; (1 Samuel 12:19) התפלל בעד עבדיך "Pray for thy servants" is future (i. e. imperative) and (1 Kings 8:42) ובא והתפלל אל הבית הזה "When he shall come and shall pray toward this house" is past, only that the ו at the beginning of the word changes the tense into the future (it is Vav conversive).

Verse 10

Verse 11

ותשחת [THE EARTH] WAS CORRUPT — It means lewdness and idolatry, as (Deuteronomy 4:16) פן תשחיתון "lest ye deal corruptly" (the following words show that this refers to idolatry) and as 'כי השחית כל בשר וגו "for all flesh had corrupted etc." (in next verse of this chapter where Rashi states that this has reference to lewdness) (Sanhedrin 57a).
ותמלא הארץ חמס AND THE EARTH WAS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE — means robbery.

Verse 12

כי השחית כל בשר FOR ALL FLESH HAD CORRUPTED — even cattle, beasts and fowl did not consort with their own species (Genesis Rabbah 28:8).

Verse 13

קץ כל בשר THE END OF ALL FLESH — Wherever you find lewdness and idolatry, punishment of an indiscriminate character comes upon the world killing good and bad alike (Genesis Rabbah 26:5).
כי מלאה הארץ חמס FOR THE EARTH IS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE — Their fate was sealed only on account of their sin of robbery (Sanhedrin 108a).
את הארץ [I WILL DESTROY THEM] WITH THE EARTH — It is similar to מן הארץ "from the earth"; other examples of this use of את are: (Exodus 9:29) בצאתי ''when I go forth" את העיר which means מן העיר "from the city" and (1 Kings 15:23) חלה ''he suffered" את רגליו which means מן רגליו ''from his feet". Another explanation of את הארץ is: "together with the earth" — for the earth was blotted out and washed away to the depth of a furrow of three handbreadths (Genesis Rabbah 31:7).

Verse 14

עשה לך תבת MAKE THEE AN ARK — There are numerous ways by which God could have saved Noah; why, then, did he burden him with this construction of the Ark? So that the men of the generation of the Flood might see him employed on it for 120 years and might ask him, "What do you need this for"? and so that he might answer them, "The Holy One, blessed be He, is

about to bring a flood upon the world" — perhaps they might repent (Sanhedrin 108b).
(literally, return to God). עצי גופר GOPHER WOOD — Thus is its name. Why of this species (גפר)? Because of the (גפרית) "sulphur" by which it was decreed that they were to be blotted out.
קנים ROOMS — Separate cabins for each kind of cattle and beast.
בכפר WITH כפר — This is an Aramaic term for the Hebrew זפת "pitch'', and in the Talmud (Shabbat 67a) we find the noun כופרא "pitch". In the case of the ark (cradle) in which Moses was placed, since the waters were not rapid it sufficed that it should be daubed with slime inside and with pitch outside; and a further reason for this was that this righteous person (Moses) should not smell the bad odour of the pitch (Sotah 12a). Here, however, because of the rough waters he had to cover it with pitch inside as well as outside.

Verse 15

Verse 16

צהר A LIGHT — Some say this was a window; others say that it was a precious stone that gave light to them (Genesis Rabbah 31:11).
ואל אמה תכלנה מלמעלה AND TO A CUBIT SHALT THOU FINISH IT UPWARD — Its covering (roof) slanted upwards so that it narrowed at the top to a cubit, in order that the water should run off on both sides.
בצדה תשים THOU SHALT SET [THE DOOR] IN THE SIDE THEREOF — in order that the rain might not penetrate.
תחתים שנים ושלישים WITH LOWER, SECOND AND THIRD STORIES — Three stories one above the other: the top rooms for the human beings, the middle ones as cabins for the cattle, and the bottom was for the refuse (Sanhedrin 108b).

Verse 17

ואני הנני מביא AND I, BEHOLD, I DO BRING — God says, "Now I am prepared to agree with those angels who cautioned Me and long ago said to Me (when I was about to create man), (Psalms 8:5) "What is man that thou art mindful of him" (Genesis Rabbah 31:12).
מבול A FLOOD — so called because it ruined (בלה) everything; because it cast everything into confusion (בלל), and because it brought (הוביל from root יבל) everything down from the heights to a lower level. And this last explanation underlies the translation of Onkelos who translates it by טופנא (Ar. טוף = Heb. צוף) because the Flood caused everything to float about and brought it (the Ark) to Babel which is a low-lying district. That is the reason why it (Babylon) is called, also, Shinar (שנער): because all those who died through the Flood were shaken out (ננערו) into it (Shabbat 113b).

Verse 18

והקמתי את בריתי BUT I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT — A covenant was necessary for the sake of the fruits that they should not rot or decay; and also that the wicked people of that generation should not kill him (Genesis Rabbah 31:12)
אתה ובניך ואשתך THOU, AND THY SONS AND THY WIFE — Males separately and females separately. From this one may infer that they were not permitted to live together in the Ark as man and wife (Sanhedrin 108b).

Verse 19

ומכל החי AND OF EVERY LIVING THING — Even of demons (Genesis Rabbah 31:13).
שנים מכל TWO OF EVERY SORT — Even of the least numerous amongst them there were not less than two—one male, the other female.

Verse 20

מהעוף למינהו OF THE FOWLS AFTER THEIR KIND— those that had kept to their own species and had not corrupted their way (taking the words to mean, "of the fowls that had kept to their own kind"). All these came of their own accord, but only those which the Ark was allowing to pass in did Noah permit to enter (Sanhedrin 108b).

Verse 21

Verse 22

וישע נח THUS DID NOAH — This refers to the building of the Ark (Genesis Rabbah 31:14).

Chapter 7

Verse 1

ראיתי צדיק [THEE] HAVE I SEEN RIGHTEOUS — It does not say "righteous and wholehearted" (as it does at the beginning of the Sedrah); hence we may infer that only a part of a man's good qualities should be enumerated in his presence (since here God is speaking to Noah and calls him only "righteous"), but that in his absence the whole of his good qualities may be told (since when the Torah speaks about him in the earlier passage it calls him "righteous and wholehearted") (Eruvin 18b).

Verse 2

הטהורה CLEAN—It means those cattle which will in future be permitted to Israel as clean; we thus learn that Noah studied the Torah.
שבעה שבעה SEVEN AND SEVEN — so many, in order that he might offer some of them as a sacrifice when leaving the Ark (Genesis Rabbah 34:9).

Verse 3

גם מעוף השמים וגו׳ OF FOWLS ALSO OF THE AIR — Scripture here means "clean" birds just as the animals in verse 2 are stated to be clean, for what is not explicitly stated may be learned by analogy from what is explicitly stated.

Verse 4

כי לימים עוד שבעה FOR YET SEVEN DAYS — These are the seven days of mourning for the righteous man Methuselah for whose honour the Holy One, blessed be He, had regard, and therefore postponed punishment. Go and calculate the years of Methuselah and you will find that they came to an end (i. e. he died) in the six hundredth year of Noah's life (which coincided with the date of the Flood) (Sanhedrin 108b).

כי לימים עוד FOR YET [SEVEN] DAYS — What is meant by עוד "yet", "more"? A further period of time: this period (seven days) additional to the 120 years of respite that was promised (Sanhedrin 108b).
ארבעים יום FORTY DAYS — corresponding to the period of a child's formation, for by their sinning they had troubled their Creator to form embryos of illegitimate children (Genesis Rabbah 32:5).

Verse 5

וישע נח AND NOAH DID — This refers to his coming to the Ark.

Verse 6

Verse 7

נח ובניו NOAH AND HIS SONS — The men separately and the women separately, because they were forbidden to live together as man and wife since the world was living in a state of distress
מפני מי המבול BECAUSE OF THE WATERS OF THE FLOOD — (מפני properly means ''from before") — Noah, also, was of those people who are wanting in faith: he believed and he did not believe that the Flood would come, and he would not enter the Ark until the waters forced him to do so (Genesis Rabbah 32:6).

Verse 8

Verse 9

שנים שנים TWO AND TWO —In this number they were all equal — the least number was two.
באו אל נח THEY CAME TO NOAH — of their own accord (Genesis Rabbah 32).

Verse 10

Verse 11

בחדש השני IN THE SECOND MONTH — Rabbi Eliezer said, "This is the month Marcheshvan"; Rabbi Joshua said, "This is the month Eyar (Rosh Hashanah 11b).
נבקעו WERE BROKEN UP — so that they might give forth their waters.
תהום רבה THE GREAT DEEP — Measure for measure: they had sinned with רבה רעת האדם "great was the evil of man" (i. e. their sin is described by the word רבה "great") and they were therefore punished by תהום רבה "the great deep" (i.e. the expression "great'' is used of the instrument by which they were punished for their great sin) (Sanhedrin 108a).

Verse 12

ויהי הגשם על הארץ AND THE RAIN WAS UPON THE EARTH — But later on (v. 17) it says. "And the Flood was upon the earth"! But the explanation is this: when He poured down the water at first He made it fall in mercy (gently), in order that if the people would repent, it might prove a rain of blessing; but when they did not repent it became a destructive flood (Genesis Rabbah 31:12).

ארבעים יום וגו׳ FORTY DAYS AND [FORTY NIGHTS] — The first day is not included in this number, because its night (i.e. the night that preceded it, since according to Jewish reckoning a "day" comprises night-time and the following day-time) was not included with it — for it is written (v. 11) "On the same day (i. e. day-time) were all the fountains of the great deep broken up". (Consequently the forty days ended, according to R. Eliezer, on the 28th day of Kislev (Rosh Hashanah 11b). as the months are counted as regular months, one full (of 30 days) and the next defective (of 29 days), so we have, 12 days of Marcheshvan and 28 days of Kislev.

Verse 13

בעצם היום הזה IN THE SELFSAME DAY — Scripture teaches you that the people of his generation said: "If we see him enter the Ark we will smash it up and kill him". The Holy One, blessed be He, thereupon said, ''I will let him enter before the eyes of everyone and we shall see whose word prevails" (Genesis Rabbah 32:8).

Verse 14

צפור כל כנף [EVERY] BIRD OF EVERY KIND — The word צפור is in the construct state, viz.. birds of every kind of wing, thus including locusts (Chullin 139b). The word כנף means "wingfeather", as (Leviticus 1:17) "He shall rend it by the wings thereof", for even its feathers were offered as a sacrifice. Also here, the meaning is, birds with any kind of semblance of wing.

Verse 15

Verse 16

ויסגור ה׳ בעדו AND THE LORD SHUT HIM IN — He protected him so that they could not smash up the Ark (cf. 5:13): He surrounded the Ark (thus enclosing it סגר) with bears and lions which killed some of them (Genesis Rabbah 32:8). But the literal meaning of the text is: He shut the door in front of him against the waters. Similarly, wherever בעד occurs in the Scriptures it means כנגד in front of. E. g., (20:18) "The lord had made a closure in front of (בעד) every womb"; (2 Kings 4:4) "Close the door in front of thyself (בעדך) and in front of (ובעד) thy sons"; (Job 2:4) ''skin in front of (as a protection for) (בעד) skin"; (Psalms 3:4) "a shield in front of me ובעדי": (1 Samuel 12:19) "Pray (בעד) thy servants" which means כנגד in front of (i. e. on behalf of, as a protection for) thy servants.

Verse 17

ותרם מעל הארץ AND IT WAS LIFTED UP ABOVE THE EARTH — It was eleven cubits deep in the water like a laden ship that has part of it sunk in the waters (Genesis Rabbah 32:9); the following verses prove that this is the meaning.

Verse 18

ויגברו [AND THE WATERS] PREVAILED — by themselves (without any external aid).

Verse 19

Verse 20

חמש עשרה אמה מלמעלה FIFTEEN CUBITS ABOVE —above the summits of all the mountains when once the waters reached the level of the mountains (Yoma 76a).

Verse 21

Verse 22

נשמת רוח חיים means the breathing of the breath of life.
אשר בחרבה WHATSOEVER WAS IN THE DRY LAND [DIED] — and not the fish in the sea (Sanhedrin 108a).

Verse 23

וימח AND HE BLOTTED OUT — The word וימח is a Kal form and not a Niphal, and it is of the same grammatical form as ויפן and ויבן Every verb whose last root letter is ה, such as קנה ,מחה ,בנה when י and ו are perfixed, has Chireq as its vowel beneath the yod.
אך נח means NOAH ONLY. This is its real meaning. But the Midrashic explanation is (Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 9) that he was coughing and spitting blood because of the trouble he had with the cattle and beasts (אך is taken as a מיעוט limitation, meaning to say that something is defective); others say, that he was once late in bringing food to a lion, so it struck him. Regarding him may the words be applied (Proverbs 11:31), "Behold, even the righteous is paid (for his evil deeds) in this world''.

Chapter 8

Verse 1

ויזכור אלהים AND GOD REMEMBERED— This Divine Name really signifies the God of Strict Justice but it is transformed into Divine Mercy through the prayers of the righteous, whilst the evil practised by wicked people transforms Divine Mercy into Strict Justice, as it is said (Genesis 6:5) "And the Lord (ה') saw that the wickedness of man was great" and (Genesis 5:7) "And the Lord (ה') said, "I will blot out etc."— yet in these passages the Name (ה') is מדת רחמים, that signifying Divine Mercy (Genesis Rabbah 33:3).
ויזכור אלהים את נח וגו' AND GOD REMEMBERED NOAH etc. — What did He remember regarding the cattle? The merit that no perversion of their way had been seen amongst them previously to the Flood, and that they lived apart in the Ark.
ויעבר אלהים רוח AND GOD MADE A WIND (or SPIRIT) TO PASS — A spirit of consolation and relief passed before Him.
על הארץ OVER THE EARTH — Because of what was happening on earth.
וישכו AND THE WATERS ASSUAGED — The word occurs again (Esther 2:1), "when the wrath of the king was assuaged (כשוך)", and it means there abatement of anger.

Verse 2

ויסכרו מעינות AND THE FOUNTAINS … WERE STOPPED -- When they were opened, it was stated that all fountains were opened (7:11), whilst here the word all is omitted: the reason is that such of them as were essential to the world were left unstopped, such as the hot springs of Tiberias and their like (Sanhedrin 108a).
ויכלא means was restrained. withheld, as (Psalms 40:12) "Thou wilt not withhold (תכלא) thy mercies" and (Genesis 23:6) "None of us will withhold (יכלה) from thee.''

Verse 3

מקצה חמשים ומאת יום AFTER THE END OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY DAYS they began to decrease: that was on the first day of Sivan. How so? The rains ceased to fall on the twenty-seventh day of Kislev — you have three days left in Kislev, and the 29 days of Tebeth make 32, and Shebat, Adar, Nisan and Eyar have together 118, making altogether 150.

Verse 4

בחדש השביעי IN THE SEVENTH MONTH — viz., Sivan, which is the seventh from Kislev in which the rains stopped falling.
בשבעה עשר יום ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY — From here you may infer that the Ark was submerged in the water to a depth of eleven cubits. For it is written (next verse) "In the tenth month on the first day of the month the tops of the mountains were seen" and this was Ab which is the tenth month after Cheshvan — after the rain began to fall. Now the waters were 15 cubits high above the mountains so that they subsided from the first of Sivan to the first of Ab 15 cubits for those 60 intervening days, which is one cubit each four days. Consequently by the sixteenth of Sivan they had subsided only 4 cubits, and since the Ark rested on Ararat on the next day, you may learn that it was submerged eleven cubits in the waters which were then still above the mountain tops (Genesis Rabbah 33:7).

Verse 5

בעשירי וגו' נראו ראשי ההרים IN THE TENTH MONTH … WERE THE TOPS OF THE MOUNTAINS SEEN —This was Ab which is the tenth from Marcheshvan when the rain began. If, however, you say that it means Elul, the tenth month from Kislev in which the rain stopped, just as you said (see Rashi on verse 4) that "in the seventh month" means Sivan which was the seventh month after the rain stopped, then I reply that it is impossible to argue so. For you must needs admit that the "seventh" month when the Ark rested can only be counted from the time when the rain stopped, since the 40 days during which the rain fell and the 150 days during which the waters prevailed did not terminate until the first day of Sivan, and if you say that it means the seventh after the rain began to fall, this would not be Sivan. The "tenth month", however, when the tops of the mountains became visible cannot possibly be counted except from the time the rain began to fall, for if you say that it must be calculated from the time when it stopped, which would be Elul, you would not then find that "in the first month, on the first day of the month the waters dried up from off the earth" (Genesis 8:13). For it was only at the end of 40 days after the tops of the mountains were visible that he sent forth the raven (Genesis 8:6), and he waited periods amounting altogether to 21 days during which he was sending forth the dove, making altogether 60 days from when the tops of the mountains became visible until when the face of the earth became dry; if, therefore, you say that it was in Elul that they were seen, it would follow that the earth became dry in Marcheshvan (60 days after Elul). But it (Scripture) calls it (the month when the waters were dried up; Genesis

5:13) the first month, and that can only be Tishri which is the first month reckoning according to the creation of the world — or according to R. Joshua, it would be Nisan (Genesis Rabbah 30:6).

Verse 6

מקץ ארבעים יום AT THE END OF FORTY DAYS from when the tops of the mountains were seen.
את חלון התבה אשר עשה THE WINDOW OF THE ARK WHICH HE HAD MADE — for the light; it does not mean the door of the Ark intended for entry and exit.

Verse 7

יצא ושוב WENT FORTH TO AND FRO — It (the raven) flew in circles round and round the Ark and did not go on its errand for it suspected that he (Noah) intended to injure its mate, just as we learn in the Agada of Chelek (Sanhedrin 108b).
עד יבשת המים UNTIL THE WATERS WERE DRIED UP—The real sense of the verse is what it plainly implies (until the waters of the Flood were dried up); but the Midrashic explanation (Genesis Rabbah 33:5) is: The raven went to and fro in the world being kept in readiness for another errand during the time when the rain was withheld and the waters dried up in the days of Elijah, as it is said, (1 Kings 17:6) "And the ravens brought him bread and flesh".

Verse 8

וישלח את היונה AND HE SENT FORTH A DOVE at the end of seven days, for it is written, (Genesis 8:10) "And he stayed yet other seven days" — from this statement you may infer that after the first occasion, also, he waited seven days.
וישלח And HE SENT FORTH — This does not mean merely "sending on an errand", but "sending away", "letting go" — he freed her to go where she liked, and thus he could see whether the waters abated, because if she could find a resting place she would not return to him.

Verse 9

Verse 10

ויחל AND HE STAYED — The word means waiting, as (Job 29:21) "Unto me they gave ear and waited (ויחלו)", and it occurs frequently in the Scriptures.

Verse 11

טרף בפיה PLUCKED IN HER MOUTH — I am of opinion that it (the dove) was a male and that therefore it (the text) speaks of it sometimes as masculine and sometimes as feminine, because really wherever יונה "dove" occurs in the Scriptures it is spoken of as feminine, as (Song 5:12) "[His eyes] are like those of doves beside the water brooks. that are washing themselves (רוחצות fem.) in milk"; (Ezekiel 7:16) "Like the doves of the valleys, all of them moaning" and as (Hosea 7:11) "Like a silly (פותה fem.) dove"
טרף means IT HAD PLUCKED OFF — The Midrashic explanation takes it as meaning "food", and interprets בפיה as "speaking" — viz., she said. "Rather that my food be bitter as an olive but from the hand of God, than as sweet as honey and from the hand of mortal men" (Eruvin 18b; Genesis Rabbah 33).

Verse 12

ויחל AND HE STAYED — This has the same meaning as ויחל (Genesis 8:10), only that the latter is the Kal, whereas the word here is the Hithpael: ויחל means "he waited" וייחל "he had patience".

Verse 13

בראשון IN THE FIRST MONTH — According to R. Eliezer this would be Tishri, and according to R. Joshua Nisan (Rosh Hashanah 11b).
חרבו [THE WATERS] DRIED UP — It (the earth) had become like clay, for now its surface had become somewhat hardened.

Verse 14

בשבעה ועשרים ON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH [OF THE MONTH] —The rain had begun to fall in the second month on the seventeenth day (Genesis 7:11): the ten days are those by which the solar year exceeds the lunar year; for the punishment of the generation of the Flood lasted a full (i.e. a solar) year (Genesis Rabbah 33:17).
יבשה WAS [THE EARTH] DRIED — It became hard as is its normal condition.

Verse 15

Verse 16

אתה ואשתך וגו' THOU AND THY WIFE etc. — Husband and wife are mentioned together— now He allowed them to resume family life (Genesis Rabbah 34:8).

Verse 17

הוצא BRING FORTH — The Ketib is הוצא and the Keri היצא; — היצא means, "tell them to go forth", הוצא means, ''if they do not wish (if they refuse) to go forth, you make them go out".
ושרצו בארץ THAT THEY MAY BRING FORTH ABUNDANTLY IN THE EARTH but not in the Ark: this teaches that cattle and fowls also were separated, male and female, in the Ark (Genesis Rabbah 34:8).

Verse 18

Verse 19

למשפחתיהם AFTER THEIR FAMILIES — They took upon themselves to keep to their specie.

Verse 20

מכל הבהמה הטהרה OF ALL CLEAN CATTLE — He said: "The Holy One, blessed be He, ordered me to take in seven pairs of these only in order that I might offer a sacrifice of them" (Genesis Rabbah 34:9).

Verse 21

. מנעריו FROM HIS YOUTH — This word is written without a Vav after the ע so that it may be read as מנעריו which would imply that from the moment the embryo bestirs itself to have an independent existence the evil inclination is given to it (Genesis Rabbah 34:10).
ולא אסף …לא אסף I WILL NEVER AGAIN … NEITHER WILL I EVER AGAIN — He repeated the expression that it might serve as a solemn oath, and it is to this that the text (Isaiah 54:9) refers: "For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah [will never again pass over the earth]". We, however, do not find any explicit oath regarding this, but this passage in which He repeated these words, which may be regarded as an oath. Thus do our Sages explain in Treatise Shevuot 36a.

Verse 22

עוד כל ימי הארץ וגו' לא ישבתו WHILE THE EARTH REMAINETH … SHALL NOT CEASE — Of these six seasons each consists of two months, as we have learned (Bava Metzia 106b): Half of Tishri, Marcheshvan and half of Kislev is seedtime; half of Kislev, Tebeth and half of Shebat is the cold-season.
קור COLD-SEASON is more severe than חורף winter.
חורף WINTER is the time of sowing barley and pulse which are quick (חריף) to ripen. It is half of Shebat, Adar and half of Nisan.
קציר HARVEST — Half of Nisan, Eyar, and half of Sivan.
קיץ SUMMER — Half of Sivan, Tammuz and half of Ab. This is the time of fig-gathering, the time when they lay them out to dry in the fields. and its name is קיץ "summer-fruittime", as (2 Samuel 16:2) "And the bread and the summer-fruit (קיץ) for the young men to eat".
חום HEAT — This is the end of the hot season, half of Ab, Elul and half of Tishri, when the world is excessively hot, as we have learned in Treatise Yoma 29a: "The end of the summer is worse than the summer itself".
ויום ולילה לא ישבתו DAY AND NIGHT SHALL NOT CEASE — From this we may infer that they (day and night) ceased during the period of the Flood, for the planetary system did not function, so that there was no distinction between day and night (Genesis Rabbah 34:11).
לא ישבתו SHALL NOT CEASE — None of these shall cease to take their natural course.

Chapter 9

Verse 1

Verse 2

וחתכם means AND THE DREAD OF YOU, similar to (Job 6:21) "ye see a terror (חתת)." The Agada takes the word as signifying "life", "vitality" (חיות): So long as a baby, even one day old, has life you do not have to guard it against the attacks of mice, whilst Og, king of Bashan, when dead needs to be guarded against the attacks of mice, as it is said, "And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be [upon the beasts of the field etc.]." When will the fear of you be upon the beasts? So long as you are alive (חתכם) (Shabbat 151b).

Verse 3

לכם יהיה לאכלה SHALL BE FOOD FOR YOU — For I did not permit Adam Harishon to eat meat, but green herbs alone; but lo you — even as the green herbs

that I gave the full use of to Adam Harishon — do I give everything (Sanhedrin 59b).

Verse 4

בשר בנפשו FLESH WITH THE SOUL THEREOF [SHALL YE NOT EAT] — He here prohibited to them אבר מן החי the eating of a limb cut from a living animal, that is to say that בשר בנפשו (literally, flesh together with its life) means so long as its life is in it you shall not eat the flesh. בנפשו דמו (literally, its blood together with its life) means whilst its (the animal's) life is still in it (the blood).
Consequently בשר בנפשו לא תאכלו FLESH SO LONG AS THERE IS LIFE IN IT SHALL YE NOT EAT forms the prohibition of אבר מן החי the eating of a limb cut from a living animal. And connecting בנפשו with דמו we obtain the reading also בנפשו דמו לא תאכלו ITS BLOOD TOGETHER WITH ITS LIFE SHALL YE NOT EAT which forms the prohibition of partaking of blood of a living animal (Sanhedrin 59a)

Verse 5

ואך את דמכם HOWEVER YOUR BLOOD — Although I have permitted you to take the life of cattle yet your blood I will surely require from him amongst you who sheds his own blood (see Bava Kamma 91b).
לנפשותיכם YOUR LIFE — Even though one strangles himself (Genesis Rabbah 34:13) so that no blood flows from him yet I will require it from him.
מיד כל חיה AT THE HAND OF EVERY BEAST — Because the generation of the Flood sinned and they were therefore freely exposed to become food for wild beasts which would have power over them — as it is said (Psalms 49:21), "He is ruled over by wild beasts like the beasts that perish" (these being the prey of other animals) (Shabbat 151b) — it was therefore necessary to proclaim a punishment against wild animals on their account.
ומיד האדם AT THE HAND OF MAN — At the hand of one who kills with premeditation, when there are no witnesses to the murder, will "I" require it.
מיד איש אחיו AT THE HAND OF EVERY MAN'S BROTHER — At the hand of a man who loves him like a brother and slays him accidentally will "I" require it, unless he go into banishment (in one of the Cities of Refuge) and pray for forgiveness for his iniquity. For even one who kills another by accident needs atonement: therefore if there are no witnesses to the deed to make him liable to banishment and he does not humble himself, the Holy One, blessed be He, will require it of him, just as our Rabbis explain the text, (Exodus 21:13) ''But God causes it to come to hand", in Treatise Makkot (Makkot 10b): The Holy One, blessed be He, causes them (the man who killed by accident and had not expiated the murder and the man who killed with premeditation) to meet at the same inn. The former in ascending a ladder falls upon the latter and kills him and has therefore — the accident having been seen by men — to go to banishment.

Verse 6

באדם דמו ישפך BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED — If there are witnesses you kill him. Why? Because in the image of God [made He man] and he has destroyed the Divine image (Genesis Rabbah 34:14)
עשה את האדם HE MADE MAN — This verse is abbreviated and should be "the Maker made man"; there are many similar expressions in the Scriptures.

Verse 7

ואתם פרו ורבו AND YE, BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY — According to the real sense, the first time this mas said to man (Genesis 9:1) it was said as a

blessing (an assurance that they would be fruitful); here it is a command (Ketubot 5a). According to the Midrashic explanation this command is mentioned here after the mention of murder in order to liken one who abstains from having children to one who sheds blood (Yevamot 63b).

Verse 8

Verse 9

ואני הנני AND I BEHOLD I — "I am in agreement with you"; He said this because Noah feared to fulfil the duty of propagating the species until the Holy One, blessed be He, promised him that he would not again destroy the world and this promise God made (Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 11). Ultimately He said to him, "If you are still anxious I am willing to give to My promise the permanence and strength of a covenant and I will give you a sign."

Verse 10

חית הארץ אתכם AND EVERY ANIMAL OF THE EARTH WITH YOU or, THAT ARE WITH YOU — those which go about with human beings.
מכל יוצאי התבה OF ALL THAT GO OUT OF THE ARK — These words would include creeping things and reptiles.
חית הארץ [EVEN EVERY] BEAST OF THE EARTH — These words are intended to include dangerous animals which cannot be included in the above description, "every living creature that is with you" — for these do not go about with human beings.

Verse 11

והקמתי AND I WILL ESTABLISH — I will give confirmation to my covenant; and in what consists this confirmation? "The sign of the rainbow", as it goes on explaining at the end.

Verse 12

לדרת עולם FOR GENERATIONS FOR EVER — The word לדרת "for generations" is written defective (without Vav) (implying that the sign will be necessary only for such generations as are "defective'' in faith) because there will be some generations which will require no sign since they were completely righteous, such as the generation of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and the generation of R. Simeon ben Yochai (Genesis Rabbah 35:2).

Verse 13

Verse 14

בענני ענן WHEN I BRING A CLOUD — When I have it in mind to bring darkness and destruction upon the world.

Verse 15

Verse 16

בין אלהים ובין כל נפש חיה BETWEEN GOD AND EVERY LIVING SOUL — Between Divine Justice and you; for otherwise it should have written "between Me and every living thing". But this is its explanation: when Justice will come to accuse and condemn you I will look upon the sign and remember the covenant (see Genesis Rabbah 35:3).

Verse 17

זאת אות הברית THIS IS THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT — He pointed to the rainbow, and said to him, "This is the sign of which I have spoken."

Verse 18

וחם הוא אבי כנען AND HAM IS THE FATHER OF CANAAN — Why is it necessary to mention this here? Because this section goes on to deal with the account of Noah's drunkenness when Ham sinned and through him Canaan was cursed. Now as the generations of Ham have not yet been mentioned and we therefore would not know that Canaan was his son, it was necessary to state here that "Ham is the father of Canaan".

Verse 19

Verse 20

ויחל [AND NOAH] BEGAN — (The word may be connected also with a root meaning "profane") He profaned (degraded) himself, for he should have occupied himself first with planting something different (Genesis Rabbah 36:3).
איש האדמה A MAN OF THE GROUND — The master (owner, lord) of the ground; similar to Ruth 1:3 איש נעמי "The husband (lord) of Naomi".
ויטע כרם AND HE PLANTED A VINEYARD — When he went into the Ark he had taken with him vine-branches and shoots of fig trees (Genesis Rabbah 36:3).

Verse 21

ויתגל AND HE UNCOVERED HIMSELF — This is the Hithpael form.
אהלה HIS TENT — This word is written אהלה (with ה at end instead of ו) so that it may be regarded as an allusion to the ten tribes who were spoken of as Samaria which was called "אהלה" Ohala and who were exiled because of indulgence in wine, at it is said (Amos 6:6) ''that drink wine in bowls".

Verse 22

וירא חם אבי כנען AND HAM THE FATHER OF CANAAN SAW — Some of our Rabbis say that Canaan saw it and told his father about it, and on that account he is mentioned in connection with this matter and was cursed (Genesis Rabbah 36:7).
וירא את ערות אביו AND HE SAW HIS FATHER'S NAKEDNESS — Some say that he castrated him and some say that he sodomized him (Sanhedrin 70a).

Verse 23

ויקח שם ויפת AND SHEM AND JAPHETH TOOK — (literally, "And Shem took and Japheth") It is not written here ויקחו ''And they took", but ויקח "And he took", in order to teach regarding Shem that he devoted himself to this duty with more eagerness than Japheth. Therefore have Shem's sons

received the privilege of wearing the cloak that has fringes, and the sons of Japheth were privileged to receive honorable burial, as it is said, (Ezekiel 39:11) "I will give unto Gog (a descendant of Japheth) a place fit for burial [in Israel]". But as for Ham who despised his father — of his descendants it is said (Isaiah 20:4) "So shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia (these were peopled by the children of Ham) young and old, naked and barefoot and with buttocks uncovered etc." (Genesis Rabbah 36:6 and Tanchuma 1:2:15).
ופניהם אחורנית AND THEIR FACES WERE BACKWARD — Wherefore is it written a second time (that they turned themselves backward)? It is to tell us that when they came near to him and it was necessary for them to turn round in order to cover him they kept their faces turned away (Genesis Rabbah 36:6).

Verse 24

בנו הקטן HIS YOUNGER SON — The unworthy and despicable one, as (Jeremiah 49:15) "For, behold, I make thee small (קטן) among the nations, and despised among men" (Genesis Rabbah 36:7).

Verse 25

ארור כנען CURSED BE CANAAN — You have brought it about that I cannot beget a fourth son to serve me; cursed, therefore, be your fourth son (see Chap. 10:6) to serve under the descendants of these elder ones upon whom the duty of serving me will devolve from now on. Why did Ham maltreat him in this manner? He said to his brothers, "Adam Harishon had two sons and one killed the other in order that he might possess the whole world(Genesis Rabbah 36:7): our father already has three sons, and he wishes to have yet another ".

Verse 26

ברוך ה' אלהי שם BLESSED BE THE ETERNAL, THE GOD OF SHEM, who will in days to come carry out his promise to his descendants to give them the land of Canaan.
ויהי AND MAY HE BE — Canaan — their servant serving and paying tribute (Cp. Josh. 16:10).

Verse 27

יפת אלהים ליפת MAY GOD ENLARGE JAPHETH — The Targum renders the verb by יפתי meaning, "may He extend".
וישכון באהלי שם AND MAY HE DWELL IN THE TENTS OF SHEM — may He make His Divine Presence (Shechinah) dwell in Israel. According to the Midrashic exposition of the Sages (Yoma 10a) it means: Although God enlarged Japheth inasmuch that Cyrus, who was a descendant of Japheth, built the second Temple, yet the Shechinah did not dwell in it. Where, then, did it dwell? In the first Temple which Solomon, a descendant of Shem, built.
ויהי כנען עבד למו AND MAY CANAAN BE SERVANT TO THEM — Even when the children of Shem be in exile, children of Canaan will be sold to them as slaves.

Chapter 10

Verse 1

Verse 2

ותירס AND TIRAS — This is Persia (Yoma 10a).

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

להיות גבור TO BE A MIGHTY ONE — Mighty in causing the whole world to rebel against the Holy One, blessed be He, by the plan he devised for the generation that witnessed the separation of the races (דור הפלגה) to build the Tower of Babel (Genesis Rabbah 23:7).

Verse 9

גבור ציד A MIGHTY HUNTER — He ensnared the minds of people by his words, misleading them to rebel against the Omnipresent (Genesis Rabbah 37:2). לפני ה' BEFORE THE LORD — intending purposely to provoke Him to His face על כן יאמר WHEREFORE IT IS SAID — Regarding any man who brazenly acts wickedly — knowing his Master and yet of set purpose rebelling against Him — it is said. "This man is like Nimrod a mighty hunter" (Sifra, Bechukotai, Section 2 1-2).

Verse 10

Verse 11

מן הארץ וגו' OUT OF THAT LAND WENT FORTH ASSHUR — As soon as Asshur saw that his sons listened to Nimrod, rebelling against the Omnipresent by building the Tower, he went forth out of their midst (Genesis Rabbah 37:4).

Verse 12

העיר הגדלה THE GREAT CITY — This refers to Nineveh (not to Calah the last mentioned city nor to Resen), as it is said (Jonah 3:3) "Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city" (Yoma 10a).

Verse 13

להבים LEHABIM — So called because their faces were fiery as a flame.

Verse 14

ואת פתרסים ואת כסלחים אשר יצאו משם פלשתים AND PATHRUSIM AND CASLUHIM OUT OF WHOM CAME PHILISTIM — They (the Philistines) were descended from both of them for the Pathrusim and the Casluhim used to live together in promiscuous intercourse, and the Philistines were their offspring (Genesis Rabbah 37:5).

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

ואחר נפוצו AND AFTERWARDS WERE SPREAD ABROAD — From these many families were spread abroad (besides those already mentioned. 5:15—18).

Verse 19

גבול הכנעני THE BOUNDARY OF THE CANAANITE means the end of his land: wherever גבול occurs it signifies end and extremity.
באכה AS THOU COMEST - This word is a noun. I think it is a colloquial expression like that used by a person who says to another: This boundary stretches until you come to such and such a boundary.

Verse 20

ללשנתם בארצתם AFTER THEIR TONGUES, IN THEIR LANDS — Although these were of different tongues and lands they are nevertheless all sons of Ham.

Verse 21

אבי כל בני עבר THE FATHER OF ALL THE CHILDREN OF EBER — (עבר means the "side" or " other side" of a river) — The father of all the children of עבר הנהר, the other side of the River (Euphrates), was Shem.
אחי יפת הגדול [SHEM …] THE BROTHER OF JAPHETH, THE ELDER — (The Hebrew is ambiguous: "the elder" may refer either to Shem or to Japheth). One cannot from here determine whether Japheth was the elder or Shem. Since, however, it states (10:10) "Shem was a hundred years old … two years after the flood" you must admit that Japheth was the elder. Because Noah was 500 years old when he first had children (5:32), and the Flood happened in the six hundredth year of his life (7:11), consequently the eldest of his sons was then one hundred years old, whereas Shem reached his hundredth year only two years after the Flood (and therefore Japheth was the elder of the two) (Genesis Rabbah 37:7).
אחי יפת THE BROTHER OF JAPHETH — It does not state "brother of Ham", because those two honoured their father whereas Ham put him to shame.

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

נפלגה [THE EARTH] WAS DIVIDED — The languages became confounded and they (the peoples) were scattered abroad from the plain of Shinar, and were dispersed throughout the whole world. We may learn from this that Eber was a prophet, for he gave his son the name פלג, "division" after an event which was to happen in the future (Genesis Rabbah 37:7). For we learn in Seder Olam that it was during the last of his days that they were dispersed abroad. For if you argue that this happened early in his life (and that therefore he was not anticipating the future in so naming his son, but that the name referred to an event that had already happened), behold, his brother Joktan was younger than he and he had begotten many families previous to the dispersion, as it is said (10:26) "And Joktan begot etc." and only afterwards is it stated "And the whole earth was etc." (with reference to the dispersion). If, on the other hand, you argue that the dispersal happened in the middle period of his life, then I reply that the verse surely does not intend to refer to the time when the dispersion took place in an indefinite manner, but to state quite definitely when it was. Hence you may learn that it was in the year of Peleg's death that they were dispersed.
יקטן JOKTAN — He was so called ("the little one") because he was so humble and thought little (ומקטין) of himself; therefore he merited the privilege of rearing all these families (Genesis Rabbah 37:7).

Verse 26

חצרמות He was so called (Court of Death) after his city. So is the statement of the Agada (Genesis Rabbah 37:8).

Chapter 11

Verse 1

שפה אחת ONE LANGUAGE — The Holy Tongue (Hebrew) (Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 19).
ודברים אחדים AND ONE SPEECH — They came with one plan, saying: "He has no right to select the heavenly regions exclusively for Himself; let us ascend to the skies and make war upon Him". Another explanation (of דברים אחדים which is taken to mean "words referring to "One"): words regarding the Sole Being (God) in the Universe. Another explanation of ודברים אחדים is: they spoke דברים חדים "sharp" words; they said, "Once in every one thousand six hundred and fifty six years (the period that elapsed from the Creation to the Flood) there is a heaven-shaking, just as there was in the days of the Flood. Come. then, and let us make supports for it" (Genesis Rabbah 38:6).

Verse 2

בנסעם מקדם AS THEY JOURNEYED FROM THE EAST where they were then dwelling, as it is written above, (Genesis 10:30) "And their dwelling place was … the mountain of the East". From there they journeyed to search out for themselves a place that would accommodate them all, but they found none except Shinar (Genesis Rabbah 38:7).

Verse 3

איש אל רעהו ONE TO ANOTHER — One nation to the other: Mizraim to Cush, Cush to Put. and Put to Canaan (Genesis Rabbah 38:6).
הבה means, "Prepare yourselves". Wherever the word הבה (come) occurs it has the meaning of "prepare", meaning that they should get themselves ready and unite for some work or plan or burden (undertaking). "Come, get ready": in old French appareiller; English to prepare.
לבנים BRICKS — For there is no stone in Babel which is a plain.
ונשרפה לשרפה AND BURN THEM THOROUGHLY — This is how bricks, which in old French are called Tuiles, English tiles, are made: they fire them in a furnace.
לחמר FOR MORTAR to plaster the walls.

Verse 4

פן נפוץ LEST WE BE SCATTERED ABROAD — That He shall not be able by bringing some plague upon us, to scatter us from here.

Verse 5

וירד ה' לראות AND THE LORD CAME DOWN TO SEE — He really did not need to do this, but Scripture intends to teach the judges that they should not proclaim a defendant guilty before they have seen the case and thoroughly understand the matter in question. This is to be found in Midrash of R. Tanchuma.
בני האדם THE CHILDREN OF MAN (ADAM) — But whose children could they have been (except the children of man, i.e. human beings) — perhaps the children of donkeys or camels? But it means the children of Adam Harishon who proved himself ungrateful when he said, (Genesis 3:12) "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, [she gave me of the tree etc.]". These people, also, were ungrateful, rebelling against the One who had showered kindness upon them and had rescued them from the Flood (Genesis Rabbah 38:9).

Verse 6

הן עם אחד BEHOLD, THEY ARE ONE PEOPLE — They possess all the advantage of being one people and of having one language common to all of them, and this is what they begin to do!
החלם is infinitive, like אמרם "their speaking". עשותם "their doing" (i.e. "they speak", "they do") — so here: "they begin to do") (Genesis Rabbah 38:9).
לא יבצר מהם וגו' לעשות This is a question (although the ה which introduces an interrogative sentence is absent): SHALL THEY NOT BE RESTRAINED FROM DOING WHAT THEY IMAGINE TO DO? The word יבצר means "restraining", as the Targum understands it; a similar instance is, (Psalms 76:13) "He restrains (יבצור) the spirit of princes".

Verse 7

הבה נרדה COME, LET US GO DOWN — He took counsel with His Judicial Court because of His exceeding meekness (Sanhedrin 38b)
הבה COME — measure for measure: they had said "Come, let us build"; He meted out to them correspondingly saying. "Come let us go down" (Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 18)
ונבלה means AND LET US CONFOUND The נ is the plural prefix, and the ה at the end is additional to the root as the ה in ונרדה.
ולא ישמעו — THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND — One asks for a brick and the other brings him lime: the former therefore attacks him and splits open his brains.

Verse 8

ויפץ ה' אתם משם SO THE LORD SCATTERED THEM ABROAD FROM THENCE—In this world (Sanhedrin 107b). What they had said. (Genesis 11:4) "lest we be scattered abroad" really happened to them. This is what Solomon said, (Proverbs 10:24) "What the wicked fears will come upon him" (Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 18).

Verse 9

ומשם הפיצם AND FROM THENCE DID THE LORD SCATTER THEM —This teaches that they have no portion in the world to come (Sanhedrin 107b). Which sin was greater: that of the generation of the Flood or that of the generation of the Dispersion? The former did not stretch forth their hands against God; the latter did stretch forth their hands against God to war against him (surely, then, the sin of the generation of the Dispersion was greater) and yet the former (the generation of the Flood) were drowned and these did not perish from the world! But the reason is that the generation of the Flood were violent robbers and there was strife among them, and therefore they were destroyed; but these conducted themselves in love and friendship, as it is said, "They were one people and had one language". — You may learn from this how hateful to God is strife and how great is peace (Genesis Rabbah 38:6).

Verse 10

שם בן מאת שנה SHEM WAS A HUNDRED YEARS OLD when he begat Arpachshad two years after the Flood.

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

על פני תרח אביו IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS FATHER TERAH — meaning during his father's lifetime (Genesis Rabbah 38:13). The Midrashic explanation is that he died through his father. For Terah accused his son Abram before Nimrod of having smashed his idols to pieces, and he cast him into a fiery furnace. Haran waited and said to himself, "If Abram proves triumphant I will be on his side; if Nimrod wins I shall be on his". When Abram was saved they said to Haran, "Whose side are you on?" Haran replied, "I am on Abram's side". They therefore cast him into the fiery furnace and he was burnt to death. It is to this that the name of the place Ur-Kasdim (fire of the Chaldees) alludes (Genesis Rabbah 38:13).

Menachem ben Seruk, however, explains that אור means a valley, as (Isaiah 24:15) "Glorify ye the Lord in the valleys (באורים)", and as (Isaiah 11:8) "the den (מאורת) of the basilisk". Every hole or deep cleft may be called אור.

Verse 29

יסכה JISCAH — This was Sarah; she was also named Jiscah (from a root meaning ""to see", "to look") because she could see the future by holy inspiration, and because everybody looked (gazed) at her beauty (Megillah 14a). The name Jiscah also has reference to princely dignity (נסיכות) just as the name Sarah (שרה) has an allusion to "ruling''(שררה).

Verse 30

Verse 31

ויצאו אתם AND THEY WENT FORTH WITH THEM — ויצאו אתם Terah and Abram went forth with Lot and Sarai.

Verse 32

וימת תרח בחרן AND TERAH DIED IN HARAN after Abram had left Haran (as related in the next chapter) and had come to the land of Canaan and had been there more than sixty years. For it is written, (Genesis 12:4) "And Abram was seventy five years old when he left Haran", and Terah was seventy years old when Abram was born (Genesis 11:26), making Terah 145 years old when Abram left Haran, so that there were then many years of his life left (i. e. he lived many years after that — as a matter of fact, 60 years, as he was 205 years old when he died). Why, then, does Scripture mention the death of Terah before the departure of Abram? In order that this matter (his leaving home during his father's lifetime) might not become known to all, lest people should say that Abram did not show a son's respect to his father, for he left him in his old age and went his way. That is why Scripture speaks of him as dead (Genesis Rabbah 39:7). For indeed the wicked even while alive are called dead and the righteous even when dead are called living, as it is said, (2 Samuel 23:20) "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada the son of a living man". בחרן IN HARAN — The נ is inverted to tell you that until the time of Abraham, the fierce anger (חרון) of the Omnipotent was kindled against the world.

Chapter 12

Verse 1

לך לך GET THEE OUT (literally, go for thyself) — for your own benefit, for your own good: there I will make of you a great nation whilst here you will not merit the privilege of having children (Rosh Hashanah 16b). Furthermore, I shall make known your character throughout the world (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 3)

Verse 2

ואעשך לגוי גדול AND I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION —Since travelling is the cause of three things—it decreases (breaks up) family life, it

reduces one's wealth and lessens one's renown, he therefore needed these three blessings: that God should promise him children, wealth and a great name (Genesis Rabbah 39:11).
ואברכך AND I WILL BLESS THEE —with wealth (Genesis Rabbah 39:11).
והיה ברכה AND BE THOU A BLESSING — Blessings are entrusted to you; hitherto they were in My power — I blessed Adam and Noah — but from now on you shall bless whomsoever you wish (Genesis Rabbah 39:11) Another explanation is: AND I WILL MAKE THEE A GREAT NATION, this alludes to the fact that we say in our prayer "God of Abraham"; AND I WILL BLESS THEE — that we say, "God of Isaac"; AND I WILL MAKE THY NAME GREAT — that we say, "God of Jacob". One might think that we should conclude the benediction in which these invocations are recited by mentioning again the names of all the patriarchs — the text therefore states "Be thou a blessing" meaning, with you (i.e. with your name only) shall they conclude the benediction and not with them (their names) (Pesachim 117b).
מארצך FROM THY LAND — But had he not already departed from there together with his father and had reached as far as Haran (Genesis 11:31)? But thus God in effect said to him: Go still further away — leave now thy father's house also.
אשר אראך WHICH I WILL SHOW THEE — He did not reveal to him at once which land it was in order that he should hold it in high esteem and in order to reward him for complying with each and every command. Similar is, (Genesis 22:2) "Take thy son — thine only son — whom thou lovest — even Isaac"; similar is (Genesis 22:2) "upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of"; similar is, (Jonah 3:2) "And make unto it the proclamation that I shall tell thee of" (Genesis Rabbah 39:9).

Verse 3

ונברכו בך AND IN THEE SHALL BE BLESSED — There are many Agadoth concerning this but the plain sense of the text is as follows: A man says to his son, "Mayest thou become as Abraham". This, too, is the meaning wherever the phrase ונברכו בך "And in thee shall be blessed" occurs in Scripture, and the following example proves this: (Genesis 48:20) בך יברך "By thee shall Israel bless their children saying, "May God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh".

Verse 4

Verse 5

אשר עשו בחרן [THE SOULS] THAT THEY HAD GOTTEN (literally, made) IN HARAN — The souls which he had brought beneath the sheltering wings of the Shechinah. Abraham converted the men and Sarah converted the women and Scripture accounts it unto them as if they had made them (Genesis Rabbah 39:14). However, the real sense of the text is that it refers to the men-servants and to the maidservants whom they had acquired for themselves. The word "עשה" is used here as (in Genesis 31:1), "he has acquired (עשה) all this wealth", and (Numbers 24:8), "And Israel acquires (עושה) wealth" — an expression for acquiring and amassing.

Verse 6

ויעבר אברם בארץ AND ABRAHAM PASSED THROUGH THE LAND —he entered it.
עד מקום שכם UNTO THE PLACE OF SHECHEM — In order to pray on behalf of Jacob's sons, anticipating the time when they would come to fight against Shechem.

אלון מורה THE PLAIN OF MOREH — This is Shechem (Sotah 32a). He showed him Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal where Israel took upon themselves the oath to observe the Torah (cf. Deuteronomy 11:29 and Deuteronomy 111:30).
והכנעני אז בארץ AND THE CANAANITE WAS THEN IN THE LAND — They (the Canaanites) were gradually conquering the land of Israel from the descendants of Shem, for it had fallen to the share of Shem when Noah apportioned the earth amongst his sons, for it is said (Genesis 14:18) "And Melchizedek) king of Salem (Jerusalem)". For this reason the Lord said to Abram (Genesis 12:7) "to thy seed will I give this land" — "I will in some future time return it to thy children who are descendants of Shem".

Verse 7

ויבן שם מזבח AND HE BUILDED THERE AN ALTAR — in thanksgiving for the good tidings that he would have children, and for the good tidings that they would possess the land of Israel.

Verse 8

ויעתק משם AND HE REMOVED FROM THERE — supply the word אהלו "his tent". מקדם לבית אל means ON THE EAST OF BETHEL. Consequently Bethel lay to his west, and that is what it states בית אל מים BETHEL ON THE WEST.
אהלה HIS TENT — This word is written with a ה suffixed instead of the usual ו so that it may read אָהֳלָהּ "her tent" to intimate that first he pitched a tent for his wife and afterwards one for himself (Genesis Rabbah 39:15).
ויבן שם מזבח AND HE BUILDED THERE AN ALTAR — He perceived by the gift of prophecy that his descendants would once stumble (fall into sin) there through Achan's transgression (see, Joshua 7): therefore he prayed there for them (Genesis Rabbah 39:15).

Verse 9

הלוך ונסוע GOING ON MORE AND MORE TOWARDS THE NEGEB — by stages: he stayed here a month or more, then travelled on and pitched his tent in another place. Yet all his journeys were towards the Negeb to proceed to the South of the land of Israel which is the direction where Jerusalem is — which is in the territory of Judah who had their portion in the South of the land of Israel — to Mount Moriah which is his (Judah's) possession (cf. Genesis Rabbah 39:16).

Verse 10

רעב בארץ A FAMINE IN THE LAND — in that land only to test him whether he would take exception to God's commands in that He had bidden him to go to the land of Canaan and now forced him to leave it (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 26).

Verse 11

הנה נא ידעתי BEHOLD NOW I KNOW — The Midrashic explanation is: Until now he had not perceived her beauty owing to the extreme modesty of both of them; now, however, through this event, he became cognisant of it (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 5). Another explanation: Usually, because of the exertion of travelling a person becomes uncomely, but she had retained her beauty (Genesis Rabbah 40:4). Still, the real sense of the text is this: Behold, now the time has come when I am anxious because of thy beauty. I have long known that thou art fair of appearance: but now we are travelling among black and repulsive people, brethren of the

Ethiopians (Kushim), who have never been accustomed to see a beautiful woman. A similar example is, (Genesis 19:2) "Behold, now, my lords, turn aside I pray you.").

Verse 12

Verse 13

למען ייטב לי בעבורך THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH ME FOR THY SAKE — they may give me presents.

Verse 14

ויהי כבא אברם מצרימה AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN ABRAM WAS COME INTO EGYPT — It should have said, "when they were come into Egypt"; but the use of the singular teaches us that he hid her in a chest, and when they demanded the custom dues they opened it and discovered her (Genesis Rabbah 40:5).

Verse 15

ויהללו אותה אל פרעה AND THEY PRAISED HER TO PHARAOH — They praised her among themselves saying, "This woman is worthy of the king (i. e. they praised her as being suitable אל פרעה for Pharaoh).

Verse 16

ולאברם הטיב בעבורה AND TO ABRAM HE DEALT WELL — he means Pharaoh — בעבורה FOR HER SAKE.

Verse 17

וינגע ה' וגו' AND THE LORD PLAGUED PHARAOH etc. — He was smitten with the disease of Raathon for which marital relations are harmful.
ואת ביתו AND HIS HOUSE — Take it as the Targum has it: "and the people of his house". A Midrashic explanation is: the word את is used here to imply that included in the curse were also its walls, pillars and its utensils (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 5). The whole of this explanation of ואת ביתו is given in an old text of Rashi.
על דבר שרי BECAUSE OF SARAI (literally, by the word of Sarai) — at her orders: she said to the angel "Smite" and he smote (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 5).

Verse 18

Verse 19

קח ולך TAKE HER AND GO AWAY — Not as Abimelech who said to him (Genesis 20:15) "Behold, my land is before thee; dwell wherever it seemeth proper to thee": but he (Pharaoh) said to him, "Go and do not stay here," for the Egyptians are greatly addicted to lewd-living, as it is said. (Ezekiel 23:20). "And whose issue is like the issue of horses" (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 5). (The passage deals with the immoral practices of the Egyptians).

Verse 20

ויצו עליו AND PHARAOH GAVE COMMAND CONCERNING HIM— עליו means for his sake — to escort him and to protect him.
וישלחו AND THEY ACCOMPANIED HIM — as the Targum has it: they gave him an escort.)

Chapter 13

Verse 1

ויעל אברם וגו' הנגבה AND ABRAM WENT UP [OUT OF EGYPT] …TOWARDS THE NEGEB — He went up to proceed to the Southern part of the land of Israel — as it is said above (Genesis 12:9) "going on more and more to the Negeb" — to the Mount Moriah. Still, when one goes from Egypt to the land of Canaan, one proceeds from South to North, because Egypt is to the South of the land of Israel, as may be proved from the account of the journeys that the Israelites made in the wilderness and from the description of the boundaries of the land of Israel (see Numbers 33 and Numbers 34).

Verse 2

כבד מאד VERY RICH (literally, very heavy) — heavily laden with burdens.

Verse 3

וילך למסעיו AND HE WENT ON HIS JOURNEYS — When he returned from Egypt to the land of Canaan he went and lodged in the same inns as he had stayed when he travelled to Egypt. This teaches you good manners: that one should not change his inn (Arachin 16b); (where the reason is given that one who does this constantly brings discredit on himself and on others). Another interpretation: on his return he paid the debts he had previously incurred (Genesis Rabbah 41:3). (In both these comments emphasis is placed on "his" — he went on his journeys i.e. the routes he had taken before.)
מנגב FROM THE SOUTH — the land of Egypt lies to the South of the land of Canaan.

Verse 4

אשר עשה שם בראשונה [UNTO THE PLACE OF THE ALTAR] WHICH HE HAD MADE THERE AT THE FIRST and WHERE ABRAM HAD CALLED [UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD] (that is, ויקרא does not introduce a further action of Abram done at that time, but refers to a former one when he had called upon the Name of the Lord); but it may also be explained that it means that Abram now called there upon the Name of the Lord.

Verse 5

ההלך את אברם WHO WENT WITH ABRAM — What brought it about that he possessed all this? The fact that he was accompanying Abram (Genesis Rabbah 41:3; Pesikta Rabbati, שמיני).

Verse 6

ולא נשא אתם AND THE LAND WAS NOT ABLE TO BEAR THEM — It could not provide sufficient pasture for their cattle. The phrase is elliptical and a word must be supplied, for instance: the pasturage (מרעה) of the land was not able to bear them — for this reason the word נשא (masculine) is used (to

agree in gender with מרעה; the suggestion is that נשא cannot have הארץ as subject since that noun is feminine).

Verse 7

ויהי ריב AND THERE WAS A QUARREL because Lot's shepherds were wicked men and grazed their cattle in other people's fields. Abram's shepherds rebuked them for this act of robbery, but they replied, "The land has been given to Abram, and since he has no son as heir, Lot will be his heir: consequently this is not robbery". Scripture, however, states: "The Canaanite and the Perizzite abode then in the land", so that Abram was not yet entitled to possession (Genesis Rabbah 41:5).

Verse 8

אנשים אחים BROTHERS — i. e. kinsmen. The Midrashic explanation is: that they resembled each other in their facial features (Genesis Rabbah 41:6).

Verse 9

אם השמאל ואימינה IF THOU WILT TAKE THE LEFT HAND, THAN I WILL GO TO THE RIGHT —Wherever you settle down I will not go far from you and I will stand by you as a shield and as a helper. Ultimately, indeed, he (Lot) was really in need of him, as it is said, (Genesis 14:14) "And Abram heard that his brother was taken captive etc."
ואימינה I WILL GO TO THE RIGHT — The word means "I will direct myself towards the right", just as ואשמאילה means "I will direct myself towards the left." If you say that it should be punctuated וְאַיְמִינָה (the regular Hiphil form) I answer that in another place also we find this form, (2 Samuel 14:19) אם יש לְהֵמִין "none can turn to the right hand", where the punctuation is not לְהַיְמִין.

Verse 10

כי כלה משקה THAT IT WAS WELL WATERED — a land of water-streams.
לפני שחת ה' את סדום ואת עמורה BEFORE THE LORD DESTROYED SODOM AND GOMORRAHH that land was
כגן ה' LIKE THE GARDEN OF GOD in respect of trees,
כארץ מצרים LIKE THE LAND OF EGYPT in respect of seed (vegetables) (Genesis Rabbah 41:7).
באכה צער means AS THOU GOEST עד צוער to Zoar. The Midrashic explanation (Horayot 10b; Genesis Rabbah 41:7) explains it to Lot's discredit — just because they (the people of Sodom and Gomorrah) were addicted to lewdness did Lot choose their locality.

Verse 11

ככר The word means "a plain" as the Targum translates it.
מקדם FROM THE EAST — He removed from Abram and went westward of Abram — consequently he travelled from the East to the West. A Midrashic explanation is: He wandered away from the Originator (מקדמונו) of the Universe, saying, "I want neither Abram nor his God" (Genesis Rabbah 41:7).

Verse 12

ויאהל means he pitched tents for his shepherds and cattle עד סדום throughout the whole district extending AS FAR AS SODOM.

Verse 13

ואנשי סדום רעים BUT THE MEN OF SODOM WERE WICKED, and yet Lot did not refrain from living with them. Our Rabbis learned from here how the text (Proverbs 10:11) "and the name of the wicked shall rot" should be applied (Yoma 38b).
רעים WICKED in their persons
וחטאים AND SINNERS with their wealth (Sanhedrin 109a)
מאד לה' BEFORE THE LORD, EXCEEDINGLY — They knew their Master and yet intentionally rebelled against Him (Sifra, Bechukotai, Section 2 2).

Verse 14

אחרי הפרד לוט AFTER LOT WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM — So long as the wicked (Lot) was with him the word of God kept away from him (i. e. God had no communion with Abraham) (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayetzei 10).

Verse 15

Verse 16

אשר אם יוכל איש SO THAT IF A MAN IS ABLE [TO COUNT] —just as it is impossible for the dust to be counted, so, too, your seed shall not be counted.

Verse 17

Verse 18

ממרא MAMRE — the name of a man.

Chapter 14

Verse 1

אמרפל AMRAPHEL — He is identical with Nimrod who said (אמר) to Abraham, "Plunge (פול) into the fiery furnace" (Eruvin 53a).
מלך גוים KING OF GOIIM (nations) — There was a place that was called Goiim because people from many nations and localities gathered there and proclaimed as their king a man named Tidal (Genesis Rabbah 42:4).

Verse 2

ברע BERA —Evil (רע) towards God and evil towards mankind (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 8).
ברשע BIRSHA — Because he rose by means of wickedness (רָשַׁע) (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 8)).
שנאב SHINAB — He hated (שנא) his Father (אב) in heaven (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 8)).
שמאבר SHEMEBER — He set his wings (שם אבר) to fly, flapping them to rebel against the Holy One, blessed be He (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 8)).
בלע BELA is the name of this king's city (but the king's own name is not mentioned here).

Verse 3

עמק השדים VALE OF SIDDIM — So it was named because it contained many fields (שדות)
There are many Midrashic explanations of this name. הוא ים המלח THE SAME IS THE SALT SEA — After some time the sea flowed into it (the vale) and thus the Salt Sea came into existence. The Midrashic explanation states that the rocks that surrounded it had cracked and streams thus flowed into it (Genesis Rabbah 42:5).

Verse 4

שתים עשרה שנה עבדו TWELVE YEARS DID THEY i. e. these five kings SERVE Chedorlaomer.

Verse 5

ובארבע עשרה שנה AND IN THE FOURTEENTH YEAR of their rebellion
בא כדרלעמר CHEDORLAOMER CAME — Because the matter concerned him mostly, "he bore the heavier side of the beam" (Genesis Rabbah 42:6).
והמלכים AND THE KINGS [THAT WERE WITH HIM] — These are the other three kings.
הזוזים These are the Zamzumim (see Deuteronomy 2:10 and Deuteronomy 2:20).

Verse 6

בהרם means IN THEIR MOUNT (i. e. הר is a form of הר — really an earlier form — with pronominal suffix מ ָ ;cf. הררי קדש etc.)
איל פארן EL-PARAN — As it is translated in the Targum: Plain of Paran. But I hold that איל does not signify a plain in general but that the lowland of Paran bore the name of El, and that of Mamre was named Elone; that of the Jordan was called Kikkar, whilst that of Shittim was called Abel — Abel-Shittim — and so, too, the lowland of [Baal] Gad was named Baal. All these are translated in the Targum by מישור, but each really had its own particular name.
על המדבר BY THE WILDERNESS — next to the wilderness; a similar use of על is (Numbers 2:20) "and next unto him (עליו) shall be the tribe of Manasseh''.

Verse 7

עין משפט היא קדש EN-MISHPAT, THE SAME IS KADESH — It is here named EN-MISHPAT ("the well of judgment'') in reference to what would happen there in the future — where Moses and Aaron would once be judged because of what occurred at that fountain. It is identical with "the waters of Meribah" (cf. Numbers 20:1 and Numbers 20:13) (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 8). Onkelos, however, translates it according to its plain sense: the plain where the people of the district used to gather for every lawsuit.
שדה העמלקי THE COUNTRY OF THE AMALEKITES — Amalek, it is true, was not yet born, but it is here named in reference to the name it would bear in the future (Genesis Rabbah 42:7).
בחצצון תמר IN HAZEZON-TAMAR — This is En-Gedi: so a text plainly states in Chronicles (2 Chronicles 20:2) in the history of Jehoshaphat.

Verse 8

Verse 9

ארבעה מלכים וגו' FOUR KINGS [AGAINST THE FIVE]— and yet the fewer were victorious; this statement is expressly made to tell you how powerful they were, and yet Abraham did not refrain from pursuing them.

Verse 10

בארת בארת חמר FULL OF BITUMEN PITS — There were many pits there from which they took earth as clay for building purposes. The Midrashic explanation is that the clay was closely kneaded together in them (was very sticky) so that it was only because a miracle was performed for the king of Sodom that he escaped from them. For amongst those nations there were some who did not believe that Abraham had been delivered from Ur-Kasdim — from the fiery furnace — but as soon as this one escaped from the slime they corrected their past disbelief regarding what had happened to Abraham (literally, they believed retrospectively in Abraham) (Genesis Rabbah 42:7).
נסו הרה means THEY FLED TO A MOUNTAIN. The word הרה is the same as לְהַר. When a word requires a ל as a prefix one may put instead a ה as a suffix. There is a difference between הָרָה and לָהָרָה, for the ה at the end takes the place of a לְ (with Shewa) prefixed (another version has: for the ה at the end does not take the place of a prefixed ל with Patach which would mean to "the") so that הָרָה is equal to לְהַר or to אֶל הַר to "a" mountain, without explaining which mountain — so that the meaning here is that each person fled to the first mountain he came across. When, however, a ה is prefixed to a word having this ה suffix so that it reads e. g., הָהרה or הַמדברה, it is the same as אל הָהר or לְהָהר (to "the" mount) signifying that mount which is well-known and has been definitely mentioned in the passage.

Verse 11

Verse 12

והוא ישב בסדם FOR HE DWELT IN SODOM — What made this happen to him? The fact that he was dwelling in Sodom (Genesis Rabbah 42:7).

Verse 13

ויבא הפליט AND THERE CAME THE ONE WHO ESCAPED — According to the real meaning this was Og who had escaped from the battle with the Rephaim (see Genesis 5:5) and it is to this that the text refers (Deuteronomy 3:11) "For only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim", and this is what is meant by נשאר "left", for Amraphel and his allies did not kill him when they smote the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim. So is the statement in the Tanchuma 4:6:25 (Chukat). But according to the Midrash Genesis Rabbah (Genesis Rabbah 42:8) it refers to Og in allusion to him as the only one of the generation of the Flood who escaped that catastrophe, and this is what is meant (Deuteronomy 3:11) "of the remnant of the Rephaim", for it is said. (Genesis 6:4) "The Nephilim (= Rephaim cf. Genesis Rabbah 26) were in the earth etc." His intention in telling Abraham that his nephew was captured was that Abraham should wage war against the kings and that he should be killed so that he, himself, might marry Sarah.
העברי THE HEBREW — the one who came from the other side (עבר) of the River (Euphrates) (Genesis Rabbah 42:8).
בעלי ברית אברם CONFEDERATE WITH ABRAM (literally, owners of a covenant with Abram) — They had entered into a covenant with him. Other versions

of Rashi have: another explanation is, they advised him to circumcise himself (to keep the [ברית] covenant), as is explained in another place (cf. Rashi on Genesis 18:1).

Verse 14

וירק Its meaning is as the Targum takes it: "he girded". Similar are (Leviticus 24:33) "And I will gird myself (והריקותי) with the sword against you", and (Exodus 15:9) "I will gird on (אריק) my sword", and (Psalms 35:3) "Gird thyself (הרק) with the spear and battle axe".
חניכיו HIS TRAINED SERVANTS — The word is written without a י (after the כ) so it may be read חניכו "his trained one", referring to Eliezer whom he had trained to the observance of religious duties. The word חנך signifies introducing a person or a thing, for the first time, to some particular occupation in which it is intended that he should remain (i. e. to dedicate or devote to some particular purpose). It has a similar sense in (Proverbs 22:6) "Train up (חנוך) a child", and in (Numbers 7:84) חנוכת המזבח "the dedication of the altar", and (Psalms 30:1) "The dedication (חנוכת) of the house" In old French enseigner; English: to teach, instruct.
שמנה עשר וגו' THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN — Our Rabbis said, "It was Eliezer alone whom he armed and it (318) is the numerical value of his name" (Nedarim 32a).
עד דן AS FAR AS DAN — There his strength failed him for he saw prophetically that at some future time his descendants would there erect a calf (Sanhedrin 96a).

Verse 15

ויחלק עליהם AND HE DIVIDED HIMSELF AGAINST THEM — In accordance with its plain sense you must invert the order of the words of the verse: "And he divided himself, he and his servants, against them, at night", as is the manner of those who pursue their enemies — they divide themselves up to follow after those of whom they are in pursuit when these flee in different directions.
לילה BY NIGHT, meaning, even after it became dark they did not give up pursuing them. According to the Midrashic explanation, it was the night that was divided): during its first half a miracle was wrought for him, and the second half was kept in reserve for the miracle of the midnight in Egypt (Genesis Rabbah 43:3).
עד חובה UNTO HOBAH — There is no place bearing the name Hobah, but the city Dan is called Hobah (guilty city) on account of the idolatry which would once be practised there (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 13).

Verse 16

Verse 17

עמק שוה THE VALLEY OF SHAVEH— So was its name; but the Targum translates it, "to the empty plain" — clear of trees and all impediments.
עמק המלך THE KINGS VALE Onkelos translates it by the king's race-course: a hippodrome that was thirty "kona" (measuring rods) and was set apart for the king's sport. The Midrashic explanation is that it was the valley where all the nations unanimously agreed (הושוו) in appointing Abraham as prince and leader over them (Genesis Rabbah 43:5).

Verse 18

ומלכי צדק AND MELCHIZEDEK — A Midrashic explanation is that he is identical with Shem, son of Noah (Nedarim 32b).
לחם ויין BREAD AND WINE — Thus is done for those wearied through battle. He showed him (Abraham) that he bore him no malice for killing his descendants. The Midrashic explanation is that he (Melchizedek) thereby gave an intimation to him (Abraham) of the meal-offerings and libations which his descendants would offer there (in Salem which is Jeru-salem) (Genesis Rabbah 43:6).

Verse 19

קנה שמים וארץ MAKER, or POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH — similar to עשה שמים וארץ (Psalms 134:3) "Maker of heaven and earth": through His having made them He acquired them as His possession.

Verse 20

אשר מגן WHO HATH DELIVERED [THY ENEMIES INTO THY HANDS] — מגן means who has handed over or surrendered, as (Hosea 11:8) "How shall I give thee over, (אמגנך) Israel"
ויתן לו AND HE — Abraham — GAVE HIM מעשר מכל A TITHE OF EVERYTHING that he had, because he was a priest.

Verse 21

תן לי הנפש GIVE ME THE PERSONS — Of that which was captured of mine and which you have rescued give me back the people only.

Verse 22

הרמתי ידי I HAVE LIFTED UP MY HAND — An expression signifying an oath: I lift up my hand to the Most High God (not, I have lifted up). Similarly, בי נשבעתי (Genesis 22:16) which means "By myself do I swear" and similarly, נתתי כסף השדה קח ממני (Genesis 23:13) which means "I give the price of the field, take it from me".)

Verse 23

אם מחוט ועד שרוך נעל NOT ANYTHING FROM A THREAD EVEN TO A SANDAL TIE shall I retain for myself from the spoil.
ואם אקח מכל אשר לך NOR ANYTHING THAT IS THINE WILL I TAKE — And if you say that you will reward me from your own treasures I will still not accept anything
ולא תאמר וגו' SO THAT THOU SHOULDST NOT SAY etc. — For the Holy One, blessed be He, has promised to give me riches, as it is said, (Genesis 12:2) "And I will bless thee" (see Rashi on this passage, where the blessing is explained to consist in ממון "wealth").

Verse 24

הנערים THE LADS — My servants who went with me. Then, again, the others ANER, ESHCOL AND MAMRE [THEY MAY TAKE THEIR PORTION] — Although my servants took part in the battle as it is said (Genesis 14:15) "he and his servants and smote them" — whilst Aner and his friends remained with the baggage to guard it yet they may take their share. From him (Abraham) David took a lesson when he said, (1 Samuel 30:24) "But as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall share alike"; therefore it goes on to say (1 Samuel 30:25), "And this had been so from that day — ומעלה — and had been so from former times: therefore he (David) made it a statute and an

ordinance” — it does not state והלאה “and henceforward”, for the statute had already been ordained) in the days of Abram (Genesis Rabbah 43:9).

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

Verse 48

Verse 49

Verse 50

Verse 51

Verse 52

Verse 53

Chapter 15

Verse 1

אחר הדברים האלה — Wherever the term אחר is used it signifies immediately after the preceding event; whilst אחרי signifies a long time afterwards. אחר הדברים האלה AFTER THESE THINGS means: after this miracle has been wrought for him in that he slew the kings and he was in great anxiety, saying, "Perhaps I have already received, in this God-given victory reward for all my good deeds" — therefore the Omnipresent said to him, אל תירא אברם אנכי מגן לך FEAR NOT ABRAM, I AM THY SHIELD against punishment: for you shall not be punished on account of all these people whom you have slain. And as for your being anxious regarding the receipt of any further reward, know that שכרך הרבה מאד THY REWARD WILL BE EXCEEDING GREAT (Genesis Rabbah 44:5).

Verse 2

הולך ערירי I GO CHILDLESS — Menachem ben Seruk explained it (ערירי) as meaning heir, and another example of it is (Malachi 2:12) ער ועונה "son and grandson") — ערירי then would mean "without child or heir" being an example of a word that has two opposite meanings, just as you say (Job 31:12) "and it would תשרש all my increase" — meaning it would tear up its roots, and the same word might also mean to take root. So, too, the meaning of ערירי is "without a child" although ער means "a child". old French désenfanté; English childless. It, however, seems to me that the word ער in ער ועונה is of the same derivation as the same word in (Song 5:2). ולבי ער "and my heart awaketh", whereas ערירי has the meaning of destroyed (a childless person being "demolished" so far as his memory in future generations is concerned; cf. Rashi on Genesis 16:2). Similarly (Psalms 137:7) ערו ערו "Rase it, rase it"; (Habakkuk 3:13) ערות יסוד "destroying the foundation", and (Jeremiah 51:58) ערער תתערער "shall be utterly destroyed" and (Zephaniah 2:14) כי ארזה ערה "for the cedar-work thereof shall be destroyed".
ובן משק ביתי AND THE STEWARD OF MY HOUSE — Explain it as the Targum has it, "the man of my household", meaning the man by whose orders all my household is fed. Similarly, (Genesis 41:40) "And according to thy word shall all my people be fed (ישק)" — so that it signifies my administrator.
If, however, I had a son, my son would be in charge of my affairs. דמשק OF DAMASCUS — According to the Targum he was of Damascus, but according to the Midrashic explanation (Genesis Rabbah 44:9) he bore this designation because he had pursued the kings as far as Damascus. In the Talmud (Yoma 28b) they explained it as an abbreviation of דולה ומשקה "One who drew up and gave to drink to others of the edifying waters of instruction given by his Teacher.

Verse 3

הן לי לא נתתה זרע BEHOLD, TO ME THOU HAST GIVEN NO CHILD —What use, then, is all else that thou givest me?

Verse 4

Verse 5

וַיּוֹצֵא אֹתוֹ הַחוּצָה AND HE BROUGHT HIM FORTH OUTSIDE — Its real meaning is: He brought him outside his tent so that he could look at the stars. Its Midrashic explanation is: Go forth from (give up) your astrological speculations — that you have seen by the planets that you will not raise a son; Abram indeed may have no son but Abraham will have a son: Sarai may not bear a child but Sarah will bear. I will give you other names, and your destiny (מזל planet, luck) will be changed. Another explanation: He brought him forth from the terrestrial sphere, elevating him above the stars, and this is why He uses the term הבט ''look", when He said "look at the heavens" — for this word signifies looking from above downward (Genesis Rabbah 44:12).

Verse 6

וְהֶאֱמִין בַּה' AND HE BELIEVED IN THE LORD — He did not ask Him for a sign regarding this; but in respect to the promise that he would possess the land he asked for a sign, inquiring of God, בַּמֶּה אֵדַע "By what sign shall I know [that I shall possess it?]" (Genesis 15:8).
וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה AND HE ACCOUNTED IT UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS — The Holy One, blessed be He, accounted it unto Abraham as a merit, because of the faith with which he had trusted in Him. Another explanation of בַּמֶּה אֵדַע is: he did not, by these words, ask for a sign regarding this promise that he would possess the land, but he said to Him, "Tell me by what merit they (my descendants) will remain in it (the land)." God answered him, through the merit of the sacrifices (Taanit 27b).

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

עֶגְלָה מְשֻׁלֶּשֶׁת means THREE HEIFERS: symbolical of three sacrifices of bullocks, viz., the bullock offered on the Day of Atonement, the bullock offered when the correct interpretation of a precept was unknown (העלם) to leaders of the nation (see Leviticus 4:13), and the heifer whose neck had to be broken (see Deuteronomy 21:4) (Genesis Rabbah 44:14).
וְעֵז מְשֻׁלֶּשֶׁת THREE GOATS — symbolical of the goat the blood of which was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies, of the goats of the additional sacrifices on Festivals, and of the goat brought as a sin-offering by an individual (Genesis Rabbah 44:14).
וְאַיִל מְשֻׁלָּשׁ AND THREE RAMS—symbolical of the trespass offering brought by a man who knows for certain that he has committed certain offences, the offering brought by a man who is in doubt whether he has committed such offence, and the ewe brought by an individual as a sin-offering.
וְתוֹר וְגוֹזָל means A TURTLE DOVE AND A YOUNG PIGEON (Genesis Rabbah 44:14).

Verse 10

וַיְבַתֵּר אֹתָם AND HE SPLIT THEM — He divided each into two portions. This verse does not lose its literal meaning although there are various Midrashic explanations of it. Since He was making a covenant with him to keep His promise to give the land as an inheritance to his children — as it is written (Genesis 15:18), "In that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying …" — and as it was the custom for parties to a covenant to divide an animal and to pass between its parts, as it is said elsewhere

(Jeremiah 34:19) "who passed between the parts of the calf", so also here the smoking furnace and the flaming torch which passed between the pieces (Genesis 15:17) were representative of the Divine Shechinah which is spoken of as fire.
ואת הצפור לא בתר BUT THE BIRDS SPLIT HE NOT — Because other nations are compared to bulls, rams and goats, as it is said (Psalms 22:13) "Many bulls have encompassed me", and it says, (Daniel 8:20) "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia" and it further says, (Daniel 8:21) "And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece" — and Israel is compared to young doves, as it is written, (Song 2:14) ''O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock" — he therefore divided the animals indicating that other nations will gradually perish, but "the birds split he not", suggesting thereby that Israel will live forever (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 28).

Verse 11

העיט THE BIRD OF PREY— It is a bird so called because it swoops down (עט) greedily upon dead bodies, darting quickly upon its food. Similarly we have the verbal form (1 Samuel 15:19) "And thou didst pounce down (ותעט) upon the spoil".
על הפגרים UPON THE CARCASSES i.e. the pieces of the carcasses. — The word הפגרים we should translate in the Targum by פגליא (פגל being the same as פגר); since, however, people were familiar with the Targum's translation of the words איש בתרו (in Genesis 5:10) ''each piece" by פלגיא (the halves), the word פגליא here was mistakenly changed by them into פלגיא and so they gave the Targum of פגרים (carcasses) by פלגיא (halves). But whoever renders it thus in the Targum is wrong for there is no comparison (similarity in meaning) between בתרים and פגרים; for the Targum of בתרים is פלגיא ("parts", from פלג "to divide",) whilst the Targum of פגרים is פגליא, which has the sense of פגול, something; abhorrent, as (Leviticus 7:18) פגול הוא "it shall be an abhorred thing", similar in sense to פגר a carcass.
וישב [AND ABRAM] SCARED THEM AWAY — The word means "blowing upon a thing and making a thing fly away", similar to (Psalms 147:18) יַשֵּׁב רוּחוֹ "He causeth His wind to blow". It is a symbol that David, the son of Jesse, will wish to destroy them (the nations), but that he will not be permitted by God to do so until king Messiah comes (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 28).

Verse 12

והנה אימה וגו' AND, LO, AN HORROR etc. — This is symbolic of the woes and the gloom of the Jews in Exile (Genesis Rabbah 44:17).

Verse 13

כי גר יהיה זרעך THAT THY SEED SHALL BE A STRANGER — From the birth of Isaac until Israel left Egypt was a period of 400 years. How so? Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born, and Jacob when he went down to Egypt himself stated, (Genesis 47:9) "The days of the years of my sojournings are a hundred and thirty years", making together 190 years. In Egypt they were 210 years — corresponding to the numerical value of the word רדו (see Rashi in Genesis 42:2) — making altogether 400 years. If, however, you say that they were in Egypt 400 years — well, Kohath was one of those who went down to Egypt with Jacob; go and add up the years of Kohath (130), those of Amram (137), and the 80 years that Moses was old when Israel left Egypt, and you only have about 350, and you really have to deduct all the years that Kohath lived after Amram was born, and those that Amram lived after the birth of Moses (Megillah 9a).

בארץ לא להם IN A LAND THAT IS NOT THEIRS — It does not say here in the land of Egypt but in a land that is not theirs; for soon after Isaac was born it states, (Genesis 21:34) "And Abraham sojourned (ויגר) [in the land of the Philistines]"; in regard to Isaac it is said, (Genesis 26:3) "Sojourn (גור) in this land (Canaan)", and of Jacob Scripture states, (Psalms 105:23) "Jacob sojourned (גר) in the land of Ham", whilst of his sons it is said, (Genesis 47:4) "To sojourn (לגור) in the land (of Egypt) have we come".

Verse 14

וגם את הגוי AND ALSO THAT NATION — The word וגם and also—(that nation also will I judge)—suggests that other nations will be judged as well: it is used here to include the four Monarchies (of the book of Daniel) who also will perish because they enslaved Israel (Genesis Rabbah 44:19).
אנכי דן I WILL JUDGE with ten plagues (Genesis Rabbah 44:20).
ברכוש גדול WITH GREAT SUBSTANCE — with great wealth, as it is said, (Exodus 12:36) "And they despoiled the Egyptians."

Verse 15

ואתה תבוא BUT THOU SHALT COME etc. Thou shalt not behold all this.
אל אבותיך UNTO THY FATHERS — His father was an idolator and yet it (the text) announced to him that he (Abraham) would go to him! But this teaches you that Terah repented of his evil ways (Genesis Rabbah 30:4).
תקבר בשיבה טובה THOU SHALT BE BURIED IN A GOOD OLD AGE — He announced to him that Ishmael would repent during his (Abraham's) life-time (Genesis Rabbah 38:12). Esau, too, did, not become degenerate during Abraham's life-time. It was just for this reason (in order that he might not witness Esau's evil conduct) that Abraham died five years before his proper time, for the very day when he died Esau rebelled against God (Genesis Rabbah 63:12).

Verse 16

ודור רביעי BUT A FOURTH GENERATION — i.e. after they go into exile in Egypt they will be there three generations, and the fourth will return to this land (הֵנָּה hither). For He was then speaking to him in the land of Canaan and it was there that He made this covenant, as it is written (v.7) "to give thee this land to inherit it". Thus it really was: Jacob went down to Egypt. Go and count up his generations: Judah, Perez, Hezron— and Caleb (whose father Jephuneh is identified with Hezron, see Sotah 11b) was amongst those who entered the land of Canaan.
כי לא שלם עון האמורי FOR THE INIQUITY OF THE AMORITE IS NOT YET FULL enough that he should be driven out of his land until that time, for the Holy One, blessed be He, does not exact punishment from any nation until its measure is full, as it is said, (Isaiah 27:8) "In her full measure wilt thou contend with her when thou sendest her away" (Sotah 9a).

Verse 17

ויהי השמש באה AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE SUN WENT DOWN —Similar syntactical constructions are (42:35) ויהי הם מריקים שקיהם "And it came to pass when they were emptying their sacks", and (2 Kings 13:21) ויהי הם קוברים איש "and it came to pass when they were burying a man" — as much as to say, and this thing happened (i. e. after ויהי supply the words דבר זה: "And this thing happened: the sun set etc.")
השמש באה THE SUN CAME — i.e. set.
ועלטה היה THERE WAS THICK DARKNESS — darkness during the day-time

והנה תנור עשן וגו' BEHOLD A SMOKING FURNACE — He foreshadowed to him that these Monarchies would descend into Gehinom (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 28).
באה IT (SHE) CAME — The accent is on the first syllable, consequently it must signify that it (the sun) had already set. If, however, the accent were on the last syllable, on the א, it would signify that there was darkness whilst it was setting (i. e. the former is a perfect, the latter a participle). It is impossible to explain it thus here (that it means the sun was setting) because it has already been stated (v. 12) "And it came to pass that when the sun was setting", and the passing of the smoking furnace took place after this — consequently the sun had set already when it passed. This is the difference in the case of every word (verb), feminine gender, whose root has two letters, as בא,קם,שב: when the accent is on the first syllable, it is the perfect tense, as is this word באה here, and like (19:9) "And Rachel (באה) came"; (37:7) "And my sheaf קמה arose"; (Ruth 1:15) "Behold, thy sister-in-law (שבה) has gone back"; but when the accent is on the last syllable it is a present tense (participle), denoting an action being done now and continuing to be done, as for instance, (29:6) "She is coming (באה) with the sheep"; (Ester 2:14) "In the evening she used to come (באה) and in the morning (שבה) she used to return".

Verse 18

לזרעך נתתי UNTO THY SEED HAVE I GIVEN — The promise of the Holy One, blessed be He, is as an accomplished fact. (Consequently the perfect tense is here used) (Genesis Rabbah 44:22).
הנהר הגדול THE GREAT RIVER—Because it is associated with (mentioned in connection with; see Rashi on Deuteronomy 1:7) the land of Israel, Scripture calls it "great" although it is the last mentioned of the four rivers that went out of Eden — as it is said (Genesis 2:14). And the fourth river is the Euphrates". There is a popular proverb: "A king's servant is a king; attach yourself to a captain and people will bow down to you" (Genesis Rabbah 16:3).

Verse 19

The Kenites. Ten nations are listed here, [yet] He gave to them only [the land] of Seven Nations. The three [whose lands were not given], Edom, Moav, and Ammon which are [referred to here as]: Keini, Knizi, and Kadmoni are destined to be possessed in the future, as it is said: "They will overpower Edom and Moav and the Ammonites will obey them."

Verse 20

ואת הרפאים AND THE REPHAIM — the land Og King of Bashan, of which it said, (Deuteronomy 3:13) "All that (Bashan) is called the land of the Rephaim".

Chapter 16

Verse 1

שפחה מצרית A HANDMAID, AN EGYPTIAN — She was a daughter of Pharaoh; when he saw the miracles which had been performed for Sarah's take he said, "It is better for my daughter to be a handmaid in this man's house than be mistress in another man's house" (Genesis Rabbah 45:1).

Verse 2

אולי אבנה ממנה IT MAY BE THAT I SHALL BE BUILDED UP THROUGH HER — This statement of Sarah teaches that a person who has no children is not firmly established (literally, built up: his name and future are not perpetuated) but is unstable (lit, demolished) (Genesis Rabbah 45:2).
אבנה ממנה I SHALL BE BUILDED UP THROUGH HER— through the merit that I admit her as a rival into my house.
לקול שרי TO THE VOICE OF SARAI— to the Holy (prophetic) Spirit that was in her (Genesis Rabbah 45:2).

Verse 3

ותקח שרי AND (SARAI TOOK [HAGAR] — She took (won her over) by kindly speech saying, "Happy are you in that you will be privileged to consort with so holy a person as this" (Genesis Rabbah 45:3).
מקץ עשר שנים AFTER [ABRAM HAD DWELT] TEN YEARS — the period appointed for a woman who has lived with her husband for ten years without having borne children to him when he is bound to take another.
לשבת אברם וגו' [TEN YEARS] AFTER ABRAHAM HAD DWELT IN THE LAND OF CANAAN — As Abraham had been married to Sarah before he entered Canaan this statement virtually informs us that the period he dwelt outside the land was not to be included in the number of these ten years (Yevamot 64a), for the promise, "And I will make of thee a great nation" was made to him with the intention of being fulfilled only after he had come into the land of Israel.

Verse 4

ויבא אל הגר ותהר AND HE CAME UNTO HAGAR AND SHE CONCEIVED from the first union (Genesis Rabbah 45:4).
ותקל גברתה בעיניה HER MISTRESS WAS SLIGHTED IN HER EYES — She said, "As regards this woman Sarai, her conduct in private can certainly not be like that in public: she pretends to be a righteous woman, but she cannot really be righteous since all these years she has not been privileged to have children, whilst I have had that blessing from the first union" (Genesis Rabbah 45:4).

Verse 5

חמסי עליך MY WRONG BE UPON THEE — The wrong done to me (חמסי)— the punishment for it I call down on you (עליך). "When you prayed to the Holy One, blessed be He, (15:2) 'what wilt Thou give me, seeing that I go childless', you prayed only on behalf of yourself whereas you should have prayed on behalf of both of us — then would I have been borne in mind (by God) together with you" (i.e. when you had the gift of a child it would have been "my" child also — not that of a strange woman). Besides this, you deprive me (חומס) of your protecting words since you hear how I am despised and yet you keep silent (Genesis Rabbah 45:5).
אנכי נתתי שפחתי וגו ביני וביניך' I HAVE GIVEN MY HANDMAID etc… [MAY THE LORD JUDGE] BETWEEN ME AND THEE — Wherever this word "between thee" (masc.) occurs in Scripture it is written defective (i.e. without the second yod) whilst here it is written plene, therefore read it as וּבֵינָיִךְ (the fem form that corresponds to בינך in our text — as though Sarah turned to Hagar saying "May God judge between me and thee"). Thus she cast the evil eye on Hagar so that she miscarried on this occasion. This explains what the angel said to Hagar, (16:11) הנך הרה "behold, thou wilt conceive"; but had she not already conceived and yet he announces to her that she would conceive? This therefore informs us that she miscarried in this, her first conception (cf. verse 11) (Genesis Rabbah 45:5).

Verse 6

ותענה שרי AND SARAI AFFLICTED HER — She compelled her to work hard (Genesis Rabbah 45:6).

Verse 7

Verse 8

אי מזה באת WHENCE CAMEST THOU? — He knew it, but he asked this in order to give her a starting-point so that he might converse with her. The expression אי מזה is to be explained thus: Where is (אי) that place of which thou canst say, "From this (מזה) have I come".

Verse 9

ויאמר לה מלאך ה' וגו' AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD SAID UNTO HER etc. (see also Genesis 16:10 & Genesis 16:11). For each statement (in these three verses) a different angel was sent to her, and this explains why in reference to each statement the phrase is used, "and an angel said to her" (Genesis Rabbah 45:7).

Verse 10

Verse 11

הנך הרה BEHOLD THOU WILT BE WITH CHILD — when you return you will conceive, just as the same phrase הנך הרה (Judges 13:7) spoken of the wife of Manoah (where it certainly appears to be thou wilt conceive in the future).
וְיֹלַדְתְּ בן AND THOU SHALT BEAR A SON — The word appears to be grammatically a combination of the perfect tense וְיָלַדְתְּ and the participle וְיֹלֶדֶת but it is similar in sense to וְיֹלֶדֶת (the participle); so, also, (Jeremiah 22:23) "O thou that dwellest יֹשְׁבָתְּ) in Lebanon, and art nestled (מְקֻנָּנְתְּ) in the cedars."
וקראת שמו AND THOU SHALT CALL — This is a command, just as one would say to a man (וְקָרָאתָ), as (Genesis 17:19) "And thou shalt call his name Isaac".

Verse 12

פרא אדם A WILD MAN — One who loves the open spaces to hunt wild animals, as it is written of him (Genesis 21:20) "And he dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer."
ידו בכל HIS HAND SHALL BE AGAINST EVERY ONE — a highwayman.
ויד כל בו AND EVERYONE'S HAND AGAINST HIM — everyone will hate him and attack him.
ועל פני כל אחיו ישכון AND HE SHALL DWELL IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL HIS BRETHREN — his descendants will be numerous, (so that his territory must extend over that which his brethren have; cf. Genesis 25:18).

Verse 13

אתה אל ראי THOU ART A GOD OF SEEING — The word is punctuated with a Chataph Kametz because it is a noun, and the meaning is "a God of seeing"

— One who sees the humiliation to which people are subjected by others (Genesis Rabbah 45:10)
הגם הלום HAVE I ALSO [SEEN] HERE — This is an exclamation of surprise: "could I have ever imagined that here also — in the wilderness — I would see the messengers of the Omnipresent after I have seen them in Abraham's house, where I saw them regularly!" You may know that she used to see them there regularly from this: That Manoah saw the angel only once and exclaimed, (Judges 13:22) "We shall surely die", and she saw angels four times, one after the other, and she showed no fear (Genesis Rabbah 45:7).

Verse 14

באר לחי ראי As the Targum takes it: the well at which the living angel had appeared to her.

Verse 15

ויקרא אברם שם וגו' AND ABRAM CALLED THE NAME [OF HIS SON] etc. — Although Abram had not heard the words of the angel when he said to Hagar "and thou shalt call his name Ishmael", yet the Holy Spirit rested upon him and he called him Ishmael.

Verse 16

ואברם בן שמנים שנה וגו' AND ABRAM WAS FOURSCORE AND SIX YEARS OLD etc. — This is written to Ishmael's credit, pointing out that he was thirteen years old when he was circumcised (see Genesis 17:25) and yet he raised no objection.

Chapter 17

Verse 1

אני אל שדי I AM GOD ALMIGHTY — I am He whose (ש) Godship suffices (די) for every creature (Genesis Rabbah 46:3), therefore, ''walk before Me", and I will be your God and Protector. Similarly, wherever in the Scriptures this Divine Name שדי occurs, it signifies the idea of His sufficiency — but it all depends upon the context as to what the "sufficiency" refers to.
התהלך לפני WALK BEFORE ME — as the Targum takes it: worship before Me — cleave to My service.
והיה תמים AND BE PERFECT — This, too, is a command following upon the previous command: be whole-hearted in all the trials I impose upon you. According to the Midrash (Genesis Rabbah 46:4), however, it means: walk before Me by observing the precept of circumcision and through this you will become perfect, for so long as you are uncircumcised I regard you as having a blemish. Another explanation of היה תמים BE THOU PERFECT — at present you lack the power of controlling morally five organs, viz., two eyes, two ears and the membrum. Therefore will I add a letter (i. e. the letter ה' the numerical value of which is five) to your name (אברם which equals 243) so that the total of the letters of your name (אברהם) will become 248, corresponding to the number of limbs of your body (cf. Nedarim 32b).

Verse 2

ואתנה בריתי AND I WILL MAKE MY COVENANT — a covenant of love and a covenant regarding the land — to give it to you as an inheritance through your observance of this precept.

Verse 3

ויפל אברם על פניו AND ABRAM FELL UPON HIS FACE through fear of the Shechinah, because before he was circumcised he did not have the strength to stand on his feet whilst the Holy Spirit stood over him; and it is to this that what is stated in the case of the heathen Balaam refers, (Numbers 24:4) "fallen down, yet with open eyes". This is to be found in Baraitha of R. Eliezer (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 29).

Verse 4

Verse 5

כי אב המון גוים FOR A FATHER OF A MULTIDUDE OF NATIONS — An acrostic on his name [אב (ר) הם]. But the ר which was previously in his name — denoting that he was the father (chieftain) only of [אב (א) רם] ארם which was his native country (cf. Genesis 21:7 with verse Genesis 21:10 of the same chapter), whilst now he became father of the entire world — nevertheless was not taken out of his name. For we find also, that the 'י in Sarai's name continued to complain to God that it had been removed from her name when this was changed to Sarah, until it was placed as an additional letter into the name יהושע, as it is said, (Numbers 13:16) "And Moses called Hoshea (הושע) the son of Nun, Joshua (יהושע)" (Genesis Rabbah 47:1).

Verse 6

ונתתיך לגוים AND I WILL MAKE NATIONS OF THEE — Israel and Edom only are intended here for Ishmael was already born to him and He could not, therefore, have been making any announcement concerning him.

Verse 7

והקמתי את בריתי AND I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT — And what is this Covenant? להיות לך לאלהים TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE.

Verse 8

לאחזת עולם FOR AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION — and there I will be your God; but whoever resides outside the land is as if he has no God (Ketubot 110b).

Verse 9

ואתה AND AS FOR THEE — This ו (of ואתה) connects this verse with the preceding matter (v. Gensis 17:4, thus setting ואתה of here in contrast with the ואני of there): "As for Me, behold My covenant is with thee" — "and as for thee, thou shalt be careful to keep it". And what constitutes the "keeping" of it? THIS IS MY COVENANT WHICH YE SHALL KEEP… EVERY MALE AMONGST YOU [SHALL BE CIRCUMCISED].

Verse 10

ביני וביניכם וגו' BETWEEN ME AND YOU — "you" is plural and refers to all those belonging to Abraham who were then alive.
ובין זרעך אחריך AND THY SEED AFTER THEE — those who are yet to be born.
המול is an infinitive equal to לְהָמוֹל just as you may say עֲשׂוֹת in place of לעשות (i.e. the infinitive may be with or without ל prefixed).

Verse 11

ונמלתם AND YE SHALL CIRCUMCISE — This word, in spite of the נ in it, is not Niphal but the same as ומלתם and the נ in it is an addition to the root, which only sometimes appears in it, as, for example, the נ of נושׂך and of נושא); ונמלתם is Kal like ונשאתם "and ye shall carry" (Genesis 45:19), but יִמּוֹל (Genesis 17:12 and Genesis 17:13) is a Niphal form — "shall be circumcised" — like יֵעָשֶׂה "it shall be done", and יֵאָכֵל "it shall be eaten".

Verse 12

יליד בית HE THAT IS BORN IN THE HOUSE — one to whom a handmaid gave birth in the house.
מקנת כסף HE THAT IS BOUGHT WITH THY MONEY — one whom a person bought after his birth.

Verse 13

המול ימול יליד ביתך HE THAT IS BORN IN THY HOUSE MUST NEEDS BE CIRCUMCISED — Here the statement that one born in the house must be circumcised is repeated but it does not say "after eight days" as in 5:12, thus teaching you that there are some cases of those "born in the house" who have to be circumcised on the first day of birth, as is explained in Treatise Sabbath (Shabbat 135b).

Verse 14

וערל זכר AND THE UNCIRCUMCISED MALE — This phrase teaches that circumcision must be at that place where the distinction between male and female is evident (Genesis Rabbah 46:13).
אשר לא ימול HE WHO DOES NOT CIRCUMCISE HIMSELF) as soon as he reaches the age when he is legally liable to punishment, ונכרתה THEN HE SHALL BE CUT OFF — his father, however, who did not have him circumcised is not punished on his account with כרת (excision, "being cut off from his people"), but is merely transgressing an עשה "a positive commandment" (for which the punishment is flagellation).
ונכרתה הנפש THAT SOUL SHALL BE CUT OFF — i. e. he shall depart hence childless and shall suffer an untimely death.

Verse 15

לא תקרא את שמה שרי THOU SHALT NOT CALL HER NAME SARAI which means "my princess"— a princess to me and not to others — BUT SARAH, in a more general sense, SHALL BE HER NAME: she shall be princess over all (Berakhot 13a).

Verse 16

וברבתי אותה AND I WILL BLESS HER — And in what did the blessing consist? In that she resumed her youthfulness, as it is said, (Genesis 18:12) "shall I have the pleasure of youth again?" (Genesis Rabbah 47:2)
וברכתיה AND I WILL BLESS HER with teeming breasts. And this happened when she really needed this on the day of Isaac's feast. For people were

speaking spitefully about them, that they had adopted a foundling from the street saying, "This is our son." Every one, therefore, brought her child with her, but did not bring the wet-nurse and she (Sarah) suckled all of them. To this refers that which is said (Genesis 21:7) "Sarah has given suck to children". In Genesis Rabbah 47:2 this is alluded to in part.

Verse 17

ויפל אברהם על פניו ויצחק AND ABRAHAM FELL UPON HIS FACE AND LAUGHED — This word ויצחק Onkelos translates by וחדי which signifies joy ("and he rejoiced'') but the similar verb in the case of Sarah (ותצחק Genesis 18:12) he translates as meaning laughter. From this you may understand that Abraham had faith and rejoiced, and that Sarah had no faith and sneered, and that is why God was angry with Sarah (when she laughed) but was not angry with Abraham.
הלבן SHALL A CHILD BE BORN TO ONE WHO IS A HUNDRED YEARS OLD? — There are some questions expressing astonishment which do not imply a doubt but rather affirm the certainty that the circumstance referred to has happened or will happen, as (1 Samuel 2:2) "Did I reveal myself [unto thy father's house?]" (Of course, I did) and (Ezekiel 8:6) "Seest thou what they do?" (You, of course, have seen it). This question, too, affirms the certainty that it is possible for God to cause Abraham, at the age of hundred, to beget a son and this is in effect what he said to himself: Would there be done to another man one hundred years old this favour that the Holy One, blessed be He, is doing to me"? (Rashi means that the words must be translated, "would a child be born to any other person who is a hundred years old?").
ואם שרה הבת תשעים שנה OR SHALL SARAH, WHO IS NINETY YEARS OLD be worthy to bear a son? Although the previous generations used to beget at the age of five hundred years, yet in Abraham's days the length of life had already become shorter and a diminution of strength had come upon people. Go and learn this from the ten generations from Noah to Abraham who begot their children at the then early age of sixty or seventy.

Verse 18

לו ישמעאל יחיה means O THAT ISHMAEL MIGHT LIVE: I am unworthy to receive such a reward!
יחיה לפניך LIVE BEFORE THEE — live in reverence of thee; similar in sense is Genesis 17:1, התהלך לפני, which Onkelos renders by "worship Me".

Verse 19

אבל VERILY — This word implies confirmation of a statement, just as (Genesis 42:21) "Verily (אבל) we are guilty", and (2 Kings 4:14) "Verily (אבל) she has no son".
וקראת את שמו יצחק AND THOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME ISAAC — with reference to his laughter. Some say the name has reference to the ten (י) trials, the ninety (צ) years of Sarah's age, the eight (ח) days of the circumcision and the hundred (ק) years of Abraham's age (Genesis Rabbah 53:7).
והקמתי את בריתי AND I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH HIM — Why is this stated? Is it not already written (Genesis 17:9) "as for thee, thou shalt keep My Covenant, thou and thy seed etc."? But since is said, (Genesis 17:7) and I will establish My Covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations", it might be inferred that the children of Ishmael and the children of Keturah (who are all descendants of Abraham) are included in this promise of the establishment of the Covenant, therefore it states here (Genesis 17:19) "And I will establish My Covenant with him (Isaac), not with the others" (cf. Sanhedrin 59b).

If so, why is there a repetition of the statement that the covenant will be established with Isaac in the words (Genesis 17:21) ואת בריתי אקים את יצחק "but My Covenant will I establish with Isaac"? But it is repeated in order to add the words אשר תלד so as to teach that he was holy from his birth (Shabbat 137b). Another explanation of why 5:21 is repeated is: R. Aba said, "from here Scripture draws a logical conclusion regarding the son of the Mistress (Sarah) from what is said regarding the son of the handmaid (Hagar): It is written (Genesis 17:20) "Behold I have blessed him and will make him fruitful", and this refers to Ishmael: Surely then, it follows logically that "I must establish my covenant (of blessing) with Isaac also!" (Genesis Rabbah 47:5).
את בריתי [I WILL ESTABLISH] MY COVENANT — The Covenant of circumcision shall be transmitted only to the descendants of Isaac.

Verse 20

שנים עשר נשיאים TWELVE PRINCES — like clouds shall they vanish, the word נשיאים being explained here as the same word in (Proverbs 25:14) נשיאים ורוח "Clouds and wind"

Verse 21

Verse 22

מעל אברהם [GOD WENT UP] FROM ABRAHAM — This is a more fitting expression to use of God, and we learn from it that the righteous are the Chariot of the Omnipresent God (Genesis Rabbah 47:6).

Verse 23

בעצם היום IN THE SELFSAME DAY — on the very day when he received the command of circumcision: by day and not by night — he was afraid neither of the heathens nor of the cynics. And he did it in broad daylight in order that his enemies and other people should not say, "If we had seen him we would never have allowed him to practise circumcision and carry out the commandment of the Omnipresent (Genesis Rabbah 47:9).
וימל AND HE CURCUMCISED — This is a Kal form (active).

Verse 24

בהמלו WHEN HE WAS CIRCUMCISED — a Niphal form (passive), like (Genesis 2:4) בהבראם "when they were created".

Verse 25

בהמולו את בשר ערלתו WHEN HE HAD THE FLESH OF HIS FORESKIN CIRCUMCISED — With Avraham, [the word], et is not stated [as it is here with Yishmael], because the only thing he was missing was the cutting of the flesh, as [his foreskin] was already flattened through sexual relations. But Yishmael - who was only a child - was required to cut his foreskin and open [and push back] the circumcision. Hence about him, et is stated. (Genesis Rabbah 47:8)

Verse 26

בעצם היום הזה ON THE SELFSAME DAY when Abraham completed his ninety-ninth year and Ishmael his thirteenth year נמול אברהם וישמעאל בנו WAS ABRAHAM CIRCUMCISED AND ISHMAEL HIS SON.

Chapter 18

Verse 1

וירא אליו AND THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM to visit the sick man. R. Hama the son of Hanina said: it was the third day after his circumcision and the Holy One, blessed be He, came and enquired after the state of his health (Bava Metzia 86b)
באלוני ממרא BY THE TEREBINTHS OF MAMRÉ — It was he (Mamre) who advised him (Abraham) regarding the circumcision and therefore He revealed himself to him in his (Mamre's) territory (Genesis Rabbah 42:8).
literally, יֹשֵׁב WAS SITTING — The word is written ישב (without the ו) and therefore may be translated "he sat": He wished to rise, but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, Sit and I will stand. You shall form an example to your descendants — that I, in time to come, will stand in the assembly of the judges while they will sit, as it is said, (Psalms 82:1) "God standeth in the assembly of the judges" (Genesis Rabbah 48:7)
פתח האהל AT THE TENT-DOOR — that he might see whether anyone passed by, and invite him into the house
כחום היום IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY — The Holy One, blessed be He, brought the sun out of its sheath that he might not be troubled by travellers, and when He perceived that he was grieved that no travellers came He brought to him angels in the form of men (Bava Metzia 86b).

Verse 2

והנה שלשה אנשים AND BEHOLD THREE MEN — one to announce to Sarah the birth of a son, one to overthrow Sodom, and one to cure Abraham, for one angel does not carry out two commissions (Genesis Rabbah 50:2). You may know that this is so because throughout this section it (Scripture) mentions them in the plural — "and they ate" (Genesis 18:8), "and they said unto him" (Genesis 18:9) — whilst in the case of the announcement it states, (Genesis 18:10) "And he said, I will certainly return unto thee", and with regard to the overthrow of Sodom it says (Genesis 19:22) "For "I" cannot do anything" and (Genesis 19:21) "that "I" will not overthrow [the city]". Raphael who healed Abraham went thence to rescue Lot; that explains what is stated (Genesis 19:17) "And it came to pass when they had brought them forth, that he said, Escape for thy life", for you learn from this that only one of these acted as Deliverer
נצבים עליו STOOD BY, or OVER HIM — before him; only this is a more fitting expression to use of angels
וירא AND HE SAW — What does the repetition of this word וירא imply? The first time it has its ordinary meaning ("he looked"), the second that of understanding: he saw that they were standing in one spot, and so understood that they had no desire to cause him any trouble. Although they knew that he would go to meet them they nevertheless remained where they were out of respect to him and to show him that they wished to spare him trouble; he, therefore, took the initiative and ran towards them. In the Treatise Bava Metzia 86b we have the following: It is written, "they were standing by him" and it is also written "He ran towards them" — how can these apparently contradictory statements be reconciled? But the explanation is, that at first they stood by him and when they perceived that he was loosening and re-binding his bandages, they retired from him; he therefore immediately ran towards them.

Verse 3

ויאמר אדני אם נא וגו' AND HE SAID, MY LORD, IF NOW etc. — He addressed himself to the Chief of them; calling them all "lords", (אדני may mean "my lords"), whilst to their Chief he said "Do not I pray thee pass away", for he knew that if he would not pass by, his companions would certainly remain with him. In this explanation the word אדני has a "profane" sense (does not refer to God, being merely a term of address, "Sirs"). Another explanation is that the word is "holy" (referring to God): he asked God to wait for him whilst he ran and invited the travellers. For although this is written after the words "and he ran to meet them", yet the conversation took place beforehand. It, indeed, is the way of the Scriptures to speak in this manner as I have explained in my comment on "My spirit shall not strive" (Genesis 6:3) which is written after the passage. "And Noah begot" (Genesis 5:32) whereas it is impossible to say otherwise than that the decree of a respite of 120 years made in reference to this verse "My spirit shall not strive etc." was twenty years before the birth of Noah's sons.) Both these explanations of אדני are to be found in Genesis Rabbah 48:10 (see also Shevuot 35b).

Verse 4

יקח נא LET BE FETCHED, I PRAY THEE — This implies bringing by a messenger: therefore did the Holy One, blessed be He, recompense his (Abraham's) children by a messenger when they required water, as it is said, (Numbers 20:11) "And Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock etc." (Bava Metzia 86b)
ורחצו רגליכם AND WASH YOUR FEET — He thought they were Arabians who worship the dust of their feet, and he was particular not to have the object of idolatrous worship brought into his house (Bava Metzia 86b). Lot, however, who was not particular about this, mentioned "lodging" (i.e. entering the house) before "washing" the feet, as it is said (Genesis 19:2) "[And he said to the angels] tarry here all night and wash your feet."
תחת העץ UNDER THE TREE — beneath the terebinth (Genesis Rabbah 48:11).

Verse 5

וסעדו לבכם AND SUSTAIN YOUR HEARTS — In the Torah, the Prophets and the Hagiographa we find that bread is the sustenance of the heart. In the Torah. "[And I will fetch a morsel of bread] and sustain your heart." In the Prophets: "Stay thy heart with a morsel of bread" (Judges 19:5). In the Hagiographa: "And bread that sustaineth man's heart" (Psalms 104:15). R. Hama said: Here is not written לבבכם but לבכם thus teaching that the evil inclination has no power over angels (Genesis Rabbah 48:11)
אחר תעבורו means after that, you may go away.
כי על כן עברתם FORASMUCH AS YE HAVE PASSED —For (כי) I ask you this thing because that (על כן) you have honoured me by calling at my place. [כי על כן] has the same meaning as [על אשר "because that". So, too, is the meaning wherever כי על כן occurs in Scripture, e. g., (Genesis 19:9) "For (כי) I ask you this because that (על כן) they have come under the shadow of my roof"; (Genesis 33:10)
"For (כי) you ought to do this because that (על כן) I have seen thy face"; (Genesis 38:26) "for (כי) she has done right because that (על כן) I gave her not"; (Numbers 10:31) "for (כי) thou ought to accompany us because that (על כן) thou knowest how we are to encamp".

Verse 6

קמח סלת MEAL, FINE FLOUR — The fine flour (סלת) for the cakes, the meal (קמח) for the dough used by cooks to place over the pot to absorb the scum (Bava Metzia 86b).

Verse 7

בן בקר רך וטוב A CALF, TENDER AND GOOD — There were three calves so that he might give them to eat three tongues together with mustard condiment (Bava Metzia 86b).
אל הנער TO THE YOUNG MAN — This was Ishmael whom he bade to do this in order to train him to the performance of religious duties (in this case the duty of hospitality) (Genesis Rabbah 48:13).

Verse 8

ויקח חמאה וגו AND HE TOOK חמאה, ETC. — but he did not bring bread, on account of Sarah becoming mentstruant; as the 'way of women' returned to her that day, and the dough became impure (Bava Metzia 87a).
חמאה is the fatty part of milk which is skimmed off its surface.
ובן הבקר אשר עשה literally, AND THE CALF WHICH HE HAD MADE — i.e. prepared. Whatever was ready first he brought and placed before them.
ויאכלו AND THEY DID EAT—They appeared to be eating: from this we may learn that a man should not act differently from the prevalent custom (Bava Metzia 86b).

Verse 9

ויאמרו אליו AND THEY SAID UNTO HIM — The letters א' י' ו' of the word אליו have dots over them (thus distinguishing these letters which form the word meaning "where is he"?). R. Simeon the son of Eleazar said: wherever you find in a particular word or phrase that the letters in ordinary writing are more numerous than those dotted, you should give a special interpretation to those in ordinary writing. Here the dotted letters are more than those in ordinary writing and you, therefore, give an explanation of the dotted letters — that of Sarah also, they asked, איו "where is he (Abraham)"? So we may learn that in his inn a man should enquire of the man (the host) as to his wife's welfare and of the woman (the hostess) about her husband's. In Treatise Bava Metzia (87a) it is stated: The ministering angels knew, indeed, where our mother Sarah was but they asked this question in order to call attention to her modesty (retiring disposition) and so to endear her all the more to her husband.) R. José the son of Haninah stated that they enquired where she was in order to send her the wine-cup of blessing (the glass of wine held by him who recites the Grace after meals)
הנה באהל BEHOLD, IN THE TENT — She is a modest woman.

Verse 10

שוב אשוב I WILL CERTAINLY RETURN — The angel was not announcing that he would return to him, but he was speaking to him as God's agent (meaning that God would return). Similar is, (16:10) "And the angel of the Lord said to her, I will greatly multiply thy seed, but he had no power to multiply, and was speaking only as God's agent. So also here, he spoke thus as God's agent. Elisha said to the Shunamite (2 Kings 4:16), "At this season when the time cometh round thou shalt embrace a son", and she said, "Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thy handmaid; see, those angels who made the announcement to Sarah said "at the appointed time I will return"! Elisha in effect said to her, "Those angels who live and endure for ever could indeed promise "at the appointed time I will return", but I am only flesh and blood (human), alive today and dead

tomorrow — but whether I live or die, "at this season [thou shalt embrace a son]" (Genesis Rabbah 53:2).
כעת חיה means at this time next year — it was the Passover, and on the next Passover Isaac was born — since we do not read כְּעֵת (at "a" time) but כָּעֵת (at this time).
The words כעת חיה signify: at this time when there will be life to you — when you will all be healthy and alive.
והוא אחריו AND IT (literally, HE) WAS BEHIND HIM — The door was behind the angel.

Verse 11

חדל להיות means [that] it had ceased from her.
אורח כנשים means the way of menstruation.

Verse 12

בקרבה [SARAH LAUGHED] WITHIN HERSELF (or, REGARDING HER INSIDE) — She reflected on her physical condition, saying, "Is it possible that this womb shall bear a child, that these dried-up breasts shall give forth milk" (Midrash Tanchuma, Shoftim 18).
עדנה means glistening flesh (skin), and so it is used in the Mishna (Menachot 86a): it makes the hair fall out and the skin smooth (מעדן).

Verse 13

האף אמנם means SHALL I REALLY BEAR?
ואני זקנתי I BEING OLD — Scripture (God) in relating her words to her husband alters them for the sake of peace, for she had said (v. 12) "my lord is old" (Genesis Rabbah 48:18).

Verse 14

היפלא IS TOO HARD? — As the Targum takes it: is anything hidden — far distant and apart (מופלא) from Me that I cannot do as I would wish?
למועד AT THE APPOINTED TIME — at the special time that I fixed for you yesterday (i.e. on a previous occasion) when I said, (17:21) "at this set time next year".

Verse 15

כי יראה וגו' כי צחקת FOR SHE WAS AFRAID… BUT THOU DIDST LAUGH — The first כי is used in the sense of "because", giving a reason for the former statement—Sarah denied … because she was afraid; the second כי is used in the meaning of "but" — "and He said, 'It is not as you say that you did not laugh, but thou didst laugh'." For our Rabbis say (Rosh Hashanah 3a) that the word כי has four meanings: "if", "perhaps", "but", "because".

Verse 16

וישקיפו [AND THE MEN] GLANCED — Wherever the Hiphil form of שקף occurs in the Scriptures it denotes taking notice for the purpose of bringing evil (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 14), except (Deuteronomy 26:15) (a passage dealing with the tithe, including that given to the poor), "Look forth (השקיפה) from thy holy habitation. .. [and bless thy people] for so great is the power (virtue) of giving to the poor that it changes God's anger into mercy.
לשלחם means TO ESCORT THEM, for he believed that they were travellers.

Verse 17

אני המכסה SHALL I HIDE? This is a question.
אשר אני עושה WHAT I AM DOING in Sodom. It is not proper for Me to do this thing without his knowledge. I gave him this land and these five cities therefore are his — as it is said, (10:19) "And the territory of the Canaanites was from Sidon … as thou goest towards Sodom and Gommorah etc." I called him Abraham, the father of a multitude of nations; should I destroy the children without informing the father who loves me? (Genesis Rabbah 49:2)

Verse 18

ואברהם היו יהיה SEEING THAT ABRAHAM SHALL SURELY BECOME — The Midrash applies to this the text Proverbs 10:7, "The mention of the righteous shall be for a blessing": therefore, since He mentions him He blessed him (Genesis Rabbah 49:1). But its real meaning is: "Shall I conceal it from him, seeing that he is so beloved by Me as to become a great nation, and seeing that all nations of the earth shall bless themselves through him?"

Verse 19

כי ידעתיו FOR I KNOW HIM — this is an expression denoting "affection", as (Ruth 2:1) "kinsman (מודע) of her husband," and (Ruth 3:2) "And is not Boaz our kinsman (מודעתנו), and (Exodus 30:17) "I have distinguished (ידעתיך) thee by name". Still the primary meaning of these terms connected with the root ידע is really that of knowing, for whoever holds a person in affection attaches him to himself, so that he knows him well and is familiar with him. And why do I hold him dear?
למען אשר יצוה BECAUSE HE WILL GIVE HIS CHILDREN CHARGE CONCERNING ME TO KEEP MY WAYS. If, however, you explain it as the Targum, "I know "of" him that he will command his sons etc.", then the word למען does not fit into the sense.
יצוה HE WILL COMMAND — This form of the verb (the imperfect) expresses frequentative action, as (Job 1.5) "This Job used to do" (יַעֲשֶׂה)
למען הביא IN ORDER THAT [THE LORD] MAY BRING — Thus will he ever command his children saying "Keep the way of the Lord in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham etc." Since it does not say here ''upon the house of Abraham", but upon Abraham himself, we may infer that he who trains up a righteous son is as though he never dies (Genesis Rabbah 49:4).

Verse 20

ויאמר ה' AND THE LORD SAID to Abraham, thus doing what he had said — that He would not conceal the matter from him.
כי רבה BECAUSE IT IS GREAT — Wherever רבה elsewhere occurs in Scripture the accent is on the last syllable — on the ב — because it is to be translated by "great" (adj.) or "becoming great" (participle), but this, here, has the accent on the first syllable — on the ר — because it is to be translated by "has already become great" (perf.), just as I have explained (15:17) "And it came to pass, that, when the sun had gone down (בָּאָה)" and (Ruth 1:15) "Behold, thy sister-in-law has gone back (שָׁבָה)".

Verse 21

ארדה נא I WILL GO DOWN NOW — This teaches the judges that they should not give decisions in cases involving capital punishment, except after having carefully looked into the matter — all as I have explained in the section dealing with the dispersion of the nations (11:5). Another explanation of ארדה נא is: I will go down to the very end of their doings (I will fathom the depths of their wickedness).

הכצעקתה WHETHER ACCORDING TO THE CRY OF IT (literally, of her) — i.e. the cry of the country (מדינה which is feminine).
הבאה אלי עשו WHETHER THEY HAVE DONE [ACCORDING TO THE CRY OF IT] WHICH IS COME UNTO ME — If they persist in their rebellious ways, (כלה) an end will I make of them; if, however, they do not persist in their rebellious ways, I shall know what I shall do — punishing them only with suffering, but I will not make an end of them. — A similar phrase we find elsewhere, (Exodus 33:5) "There- fore now put off thy ornaments from thee that I may know what to do unto thee". — For this reason there is a separation marked by a פסיק between עשו and כלה, in order to separate in sense one word from the other. Our Teachers explained the word הכצעקתה "the cry of her", to refer to the cry of a certain girl whom they put to death in an unnatural manner because she had given food to a poor man, as is explained in the chapter Chelek (Sanhedrin 109b).

Verse 22

ויפנו משם AND [THE MEN] TURNED FROM THENCE —from the place where Abraham had accompanied them.
ואברהם עודנו עומד לפני ה' BUT ABRAHAM STOOD YET BEFORE THE LORD — But surely it was not he (Abraham) who had gone to stand before Him, but it was the Holy One, blessed be He, Who had come to him and had said to him, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great" and it should therefore have written here, "And the Lord stood yet before Abraham"? But it is a variation such as writers make to avoid an apparently irreverent expression (Genesis Rabbah 49:7) (which our Rabbis, of blessed memory, altered, writing it thus).

Verse 23

ויגש אברהם AND ABRAHAM DREW NEAR — We find the verb נגש "to come near" used in the sense of coming near to wage war — (2 Samuel 10:13) "So Joab … drew near unto the battle"; — of coming near to persuade by entreaty — (44:18) "And Judah came near to him [and said, Oh, my lord]" — and of coming near to pray — (1 Kings 18:36) "And Elijah the prophet came near [and said, O Lord, God of Abraham etc.]" Abraham employed all these methods — to fight, by speaking stern words, and to persuade by entreaty, and to pray (Genesis Rabbah 49:8).
האף תספה means wilt Thou also destroy. But according to the Targum of Onkelos which translates it (the word האף) in the sense of anger, the explanation would be as follows: will Your anger urge you to destroy righteous with wicked?

Verse 24

אולי יש חמשים צדיקים PERADVENTURE THERE BE FIFTY RIGHTEOUS — ten righteous men for each city for there were five localities concerned. Should You, however, say that the righteous cannot save the wicked—but why should You kill the righteous at all?

Verse 25

חלילה לך FAR BE IT FROM THEE — It is a profanation (חולין) of Yourself. People will say, "That is what He usually busies Himself with: He destroys every one, righteous and wicked alike" —and thus did You indeed do to the generation of the Flood and to that of the dispersal of nations (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 8).
כדבר הזה ANYTHING LIKE THIS THING — neither this nor anything like it (Genesis Rabbah 49:10).
חלילה לך IT IS UNWORTHY OF THEE —in the world to come.

השופט כל הארץ SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH [DO JUSTICE]? — The ה' of השופט is punctuated with Chataph Patach because the words express a question: "Should not He who is Judge practice true justice"?

Verse 26

אם אמצא בסדום וגו' לכל המקום IF I FIND IN SODOM … FORGIVE ALL THE PLACE — all the cities, but because Sodom was the capital city of the district and the most important of all, Scripture subordinates the order cities to it.

Verse 27

הואלתי means I am willing to speak, just as (Exodus 2:21) "And Moses was pleased (ויואל) [to dwell with the man]".
ואנכי עפר ואפר I Am BUT DUST AND ASHES — I would long ago have been reduced to dust by the kings and to ashes by Nimrod had it not been that Thy mercies stood by me (Genesis Rabbah 49:11).

Verse 28

התשחית בחמשה WILT THOU DESTROY ON ACCOUNT OF THE FIVE — Will there not still be nine for each city, and You, the All-Righteous One of the Universe, can be counted with them to make up the original number of ten! (Genesis Rabbah 49:9).

Verse 29

. אולי ימצאון שם ארבעים PERADVENTURE THERE SHALL BE FORTY FOUND THERE — then let four cities be saved; so, too, let thirty save three of them and twenty save two of them or ten save one of them.

Verse 30

Verse 31

הואלתי means I am willing to speak, just as (Exodus 2:21) "And Moses was pleased (ויואל) [to dwell with the man]".

Verse 32

אולי ימצאון שם עשרה PERADVENTURE THERE SHALL TEN BE FOUND THERE — For a smaller number he did not plead because he knew already of two instances where less than ten had failed to save the wicked. He said to himself: In the generation of the Flood there were eight righteous people, viz., Noah, his sons and their wives, and they could not save their generation (Genesis Rabbah 49:13), and for nine in association with God he had already pleaded but had found no acceptance.

Verse 33

וילך ה' וגו' AND THE LORD WENT AWAY — As soon as the counsel for the defence had nothing more to say the Judge took his departure.
ואברהם שב למקומו AND ABRAHAM RETURNED UNTO HIS PLAGE — The Judge departed, the Advocate went away, but the Prosecutor continued his accusation, and on that account— ויבואו שני המלאכים סדומה "The two angels came to Sodom" to destroy it (Genesis Rabbah 49:14).

Chapter 19

Verse 1

שני TWO — One to destroy Sodom, the other to rescue Lot — it was he who had come to heal Abraham — whilst the third, who had come to make the announcement to Sarah, had departed as soon as he had carried out his mission (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 8).
המלאכים ANGELS — But elsewhere (Genesis 18:2) Scripture calls them men! When the Divine Presence was with them, it speaks of them as men. Another explanation is: in connection with Abraham whose power to receive heavenly visitors was great and whom angels visited as regularly as men, it calls them men, but in connection with Lot it calls them angels (Genesis Rabbah 50:2).
בערב AT EVENTIDE — Did it, however, take the angels such a long time to travel from Hebron to Sodom? But they were angels of mercy and so they tarried — perhaps Abraham would succeed in his advocacy for them (Genesis Rabbah 50:1).
ולוט ישב בשער סדום AND LOT WAS SITTING IN THE GATE OF SODOM — The word is written without a ו so that it may be read יָשַׁב (he sat) — because that day they had appointed him as their judge (Genesis Rabbah 50:3).
וירא לוט וגו' AND LOT SAW THEM etc. — From the practice in Abraham's house he had learned to look out for strangers (Genesis Rabbah 50:4).

Verse 2

רנה נא אדני BEHOLD NOW, MY LORDS — Behold now you are my lords since you have passed by me. Another explanation is: Behold now you should be careful with respect to these wicked people that they should not observe you, and, therefore this is the good advice that I give you, viz.: סורו נא—take a circuitous route to my house — a round-about way, that people should not notice you entering it. For this reason he said: סורו turn aside (Genesis Rabbah 50:4).
ולינו ורחצו רגליכם AND LODGE OVER NIGHT AND LAVE YOUR FEET — Is it then customary for people first to tarry all night and then to wash? Furthermore, Abraham began by saying to them, "Wash your feet"! —But this is what Lot thought: If when the men of Sodom come they see that they have already washed their feet, they will make a charge against me saying, "Two or three days have already elapsed since these come to your house and you did not report it to us" — consequently he said: it is better that they should stay here with the dust on their feet so that they would seem to have just arrived. On this account he first said to them, "Lodge over night", and afterwards "Wash [your feet]" (Genesis Rabbah 50:4).
ויאמרו לא AND THEY SAID, NAY — But to Abraham they had said, "So do [as thou hast said]"! Hence we may infer that one may readily decline an invitation from an inferior but one should not so readily decline an invitation from a superior (Genesis Rabbah 50:4).
כי ברחוב נלין BUT WE WILL ABIDE IN THE STREET — Here כי is used in the sense of but; they said: We will not turn aside into your house but we will abide in the street of the city all night.

Verse 3

ויסרו אליו AND THEY TURNED ASIDE UNTO HIM — They took a circuitous route towards his house (Genesis Rabbah 50:4).
ומצות אפה AND HE BAKED UNLEAVENED BREAD —It was Passover (Genesis Rabbah 48:12).

Verse 4

טרם ישכבו ואנשי העיר אנשי סדום The following explanation is given in Genesis Rabbah 50:5: Before they lay down, the men of the city were a topic of conversation (literally, were in the mouths of the angels), for they asked Lot about their character and doings, and the latter replied that most of them were wicked. They were still speaking about them, ואנשי סדום וגו' "when the men of Sodom etc." However the real sense of the text is: The men of the city, wicked men, compassed the house. Because they were wicked he designates them as "men of Sodom", just as Scripture said, (Genesis 13:13) "And the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners".
כל העם מקצה ALL THE PEOPLE FROM EVERY QUARTER — from one end of the city to the other end, and no-one protested, for there was not even one righteous person amongst them (Genesis Rabbah 50:5).

Verse 5

ונדעה אותם AND WE SHALL KNOW THEM — with homosexuality, as in "who have not known a man" (Genesis Rabbah 50:5).

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

האל is the same as האלה THESE.
כי על כן באו FOR AS MUCH AS THEY HAVE COME — For (כי) this kindness please do out of respect to me because that (על כן) they have come בצל קורתי UNDER THE SHADOW OF MY ROOF. — In the Targum this is given by בטלל שרותי: the Targum (Aramaic) for קורה (a beam) is שרותא.

Verse 9

ויאמרו גש הלאה AND THEY SAID, STEP BACK — Get you away over there — as much as to say, Take yourself aside and keep away from us. Similarly wherever the word הלאה occurs in Scripture it has the meaning of further away. For example: (Numbers 17:2) "Scatter (הלאה) yonder"; (1 Samuel 20:22) "Behold the arrows are beyond thee (הלאה)" Thus גש הלאה signifies, withdraw yourself further away (old French Retire-toi de nous). It is an expression of contempt, signifying, "we do not take any notice of you!" Of a similar character are: (Isaiah 65:5) "Stand by thyself (אל תגש בי) come not near unto me", and (Isaiah 49:20) גשה לי "Give place to me that I may dwell" which means "withdraw aside for my sake (לי) that I may dwell where you are now". — They really meant to say to Lot: "You intercede for these strangers; how dare you!" In reply to what he had said to them regarding his daughters they answered: "Get out of the way" — a somewhat gentle expression — whilst with regard to his advocacy for the strangers they retorted, האחד בא לגור THIS MAN CAME TO SOJOURN — You are the only strange man amongst us, for you have come to sojourn here, וישפוט שפוט and you make yourself a Reprover of us!
הדלת THE DOOR — This term דלת signifies the wooden frame-work which swings round on hinges to close and open the entrance (cf. Verse 11).

Verse 10

Verse 11

פתח THE DOOR (literally, opening) — This means the hollow space (opening) through which people go in and out.
בסנורים This is an attack of blindness (cf. Yoma 28b)
מקטן ועד גדול FROM SMALL TO GREAT — The small had begun this wrongdoing — as it is said, (Genesis 19:4) "both young and old" — therefore the punishment started with them (Genesis Rabbah 50:8).

Verse 12

עד מי לך פה WHOM HAST THOU YET HERE — The evident sense of the verse is: whom else have you in this city besides thy wife and daughters who are at home with you.
חתן ובניך ובנותיך SON-IN-LAW, THY SONS AND THY DAUGHTERS — If you have a son-in-law, sons or daughters take them out of this place.
ובניך THY SONS means the sons of your married daughters. The Midrashic explanation of עוד YET is: since they have perpetrated so disgraceful an act, can you yet be so bold (more literally, "can you yet open your mouth") to speak in defence of them? — for the whole night through he had been talking in favor of them. To obtain this explanation you must read: עוד מי לך פֶּה Have you yet a mouth! (instead of פה here) (Genesis Rabbah 50:5).

Verse 13

Verse 14

חתניו SONS- IN-LAW — he had two married daughters in the city (Genesis Rabbah 50:9).
לוקחי בנותיו THOSE WHO WERE MARRYING HIS DAUGHTERS — those to whom his daughters at home were betrothed (Genesis Rabbah 50:9).

Verse 15

ויאיצו THEY URGED [LOT] — as the Targum takes it, "they pressed" — i.e. they hurried him.
הנמצאות WHO ARE HERE (literally, who can be found) — who are ready at hand in the house to be rescued. There is a Midrashic explanation also, but this is the proper way to explain the text.
תספה means [LEST] THOU BE MADE AN END OF. The words (Deuteronomy 2:14) עד תום כל הדור "until all the generation were completely ended" are translated by Onkelos: עד דסף כל דרא (the same root סף as in our text).

Verse 16

ויתמהמה BUT HE LINGERED in order to save his property.
ויחזיקו AND THE MEN LAID HOLD [UPON HIS HAND]— One of these was commissioned to rescue him whilst his fellow was to overthrow Sodom; that is why it is stated (v. 17) "And he said, escape", and it is not stated "And they said" (Genesis Rabbah 50:11).

Verse 17

המלט על נפשך ESCAPE FOR THY LIFE — Let it suffice you to save your lives; do not give a thought to your possessions.
אל תבט אחריך LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE — You sinned with them but art saved through the merit of Abraham. It is not fitting that you should witness their doom whilst you yourself are escaping (Genesis Rabbah 50:11).
בכל הככר IN ALL THE PLAIN — the plain of the Jordan (cf. Genesis 13:11).
ההרה המלט ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAIN — Flee to Abraham who is dwelling in the mountain — as it is said, (Genesis 12:8) "And he removed his tent thence unto the mountain". He was still dwelling there, as it is said, (Genesis 13:3) "[And he went unto] … the place where his tent had been at first", and although it is stated (Genesis 13:18) "And Abraham moved his tent etc.", he had many tents and they stretched as far as Hebron.
המלט ESCAPE — it means "slipping away" and similarly wherever this root מלט occurs in the Scriptures; in old French émisser. Examples are: (Isaiah 66:7) "she was delivered of (המליטה) a man child" i. e. the embryo slipped out of the womb; (Psalms 124:7) "[Our soul] is escaped (נמלטה) like a bird"; and (Isaiah 46:2) "They could not deliver (מלט) the burden", i.e. discharge (make slip out) the burden of excrement in their bowel-passages.

Verse 18

אל נא אדני OH NOT SO, MY LORD — Our Rabbis said, that this name (Lord) is holy (i. e. refers to God; Shevuot 35b), since it is said regarding him (i.e. regarding the one who was addressed by this name) (v. 19) "[and thou hast magnified thy mercy …] in keeping alive my soul". Therefore it must refer to Him who has the power to kill or keep alive. Indeed the Targum renders it, "I beg of thee, O Lord)"
אל נא OH NOT SO — do not tell me to escape to the mountain.
נא — This word is used when a request is being made.

Verse 19

פן תדבקני הרעה [I CANNOT ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAIN,] LEST SOME EVIL CLEAVE UNTO ME — Whilst I was with the people of Sodom the Holy One, blessed be He, compared my deeds with the deeds of the people of my city and I seemed to be righteous and deserving to be saved. When, however, I come to the righteous man (i.e. Abraham whom Rashi v. 17 stated to be dwelling in the mountain) I must be regarded as wicked. Thus, too, did the woman of Zarefath say to Elijah, (1 Kings 17:18) "Art thou come to bring my sin in remembrance?" Before you came to me the Holy One, blessed be He, compared my doings with the doings of my people and I was regarded as a righteous woman amongst them, but now that you have come to me, in comparison with your deeds, I am wicked (Genesis Rabbah 50:11).

Verse 20

העיר הזאת קרובה THIS CITY IS NEAR — Its settlement as a city is near in point of time — it has been populated quite recently and therefore its measure is not yet filled (Shabbat 10b). And how recent was its settlement? It dated from the generation of the Dispersal of Nations, when mankind was scattered and men began to settle down each in his own place. This took place in the year when Peleg died, and from that time until now was fifty-two years, because Peleg died when Abraham was 48 years old. How is this? Peleg lived after he begat Reu 209 years (11:19): deduct from this number the 32 years that Reu was old when Serug was born (v. 22) and the 30 from the birth of Serug until the birth of Nahor (v. 22) giving 62, and from the birth of Nahor until Terah was born (v. 24) 29, giving 91, and from then until Abraham's birth 70, giving a total of 161. Add 48 years of Abraham's life and you have the 209. That was the

year of the Dispersion. When Sodom was destroyed Abraham was 99 years old, so that from the Generation of the Dispersal (in the 48th year of Abraham's life) until this time was 52 years. The colonisation of Zoar took place one year later than that of Sodom and its sister cities. To this fact reference is made in the words אמלטה נא "let me escape נא" i.e. let me escape to the city which is (51) נ''א in numerical value.
הלא מצער הוא IS IT NOT SMALL?— Are not its sins but few, so that you can let it alone.
ותחי נפשי SO THAT MY SOUL MAY LIVE? This is the Midrashic explanation (Shabbat 10b). The real meaning of the verse is: It is a small city with few inhabitants; you therefore need not be particular about leaving it alone, so that my soul may live in it.

Verse 21

גם לדבר הזה CONCERNING THIS THING ALSO — Not only will you be saved, but I will also save the whole city for Your sake.
הפכי means I OVERTHROW, just as (48:5) "until I come (בואי), and (16:13) "after I have seen (ראי)" and (Jeremiah 31:19) "whenever I speak (דברי) of him)".

Verse 22

כי לא אוכל לעשות FOR I CANNOT DO [ANY THING]—This admission of their powerlessness was the angels' punishment for having said, (v. 13) "For we will destroy the city", attributing the act to themselves; therefore they could not go away from there (i. e., the incident could not close) until they were compelled to admit that the thing was not in their power) (Genesis Rabbah 50:9).
כי לא אוכל FOR I CANNOT DO ANY THING — The pronoun is singular number. This proves that one was to overthrow the city and the other to deliver, for two angels are not sent on the same mission.
על כן קרא שם העיר צוער THEREFORE THE NAME OF THE CITY WAS CALLED ZOAR, with reference to Lot's words (v. 20) "And it is (מצער) a little one".

Verse 23

Verse 24

וה' המטיר AND THE LORD CAUSED TO RAIN — Wherever it is said וה' "And the Lord", it means He and His Celestial Court (Genesis Rabbah 51:2).
המטיר על סדום HE CAUSED IT TO RAIN ON SODOM — When the morning broke), as it is said, (v. 15) "And when the morning dawned", i. e. the time when the moon is in the sky together with the sun. As some of them worshipped the sun and others the moon, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "If I punish them by day, the moon-worshippers may say, "If it had taken place at night when the moon rules we would not have been destroyed." And if I punish them by night the sun-worshippers may say, "If it had taken place at day time when the sun rules we would not have been destroyed." For this reason it is written, "And when the morning dawned" — He punished them at that time when both moon and sun are ruling (Genesis Rabbah 50:12).
המטיר גפרית ואש HE RAINED BRIMSTONE AND FIRE — At first it was rain (מטר) to see whether they would repent and this was then turned into brimstone and fire (Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 15).
מאת ה' FROM THE LORD — This is the Scriptural way of speaking (the Lord rained … from the Lord); e. g., (4:23) "Ye wives of Lamech" and he did not say "my wives". Thus, too, did David say, (1 Kings 1:33) "Take with

you the servants of your lord” and he did not say, “my servants” and so, too, did Ahasuerus say, (Ester 8:8) “in the king’s name” and did not say, “in my name”. So, also, here: “From the Lord” and He did not say, “from Him” (Genesis Rabbah 51:2).
מן השמים FROM HEAVEN — The text (Job 36:31) refers to this: “For by them (the heavens; see the preceding verses) He judges the peoples etc.” When God is about to punish mankind He brings upon them fire from heaven, just as He did to Sodom (cf. 5:32 of the same chapter); and when he caused the Manna to fall it was also from heaven (cf. the second half of 5:31) as it is said, (Exodus 16:4) “Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you” (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 10).

Verse 25

ויהפוך את הערים וגו' AND HE OVERTHREW [THOSE CITIES] etc. — The four cities were situated on one rock and He turned them upside down, as it is said, (Job 28:9) “He putteth forth His hand upon the flinty rock [and overturneth the mountains by the roots]” (Genesis Rabbah 51:4).

Verse 26

ותבט אשתו מאחריו AND HIS WIFE LOOKED BACK FROM BEHIND HIM —behind Lot.
ותהי נציב מלח AND SHE BECAME A PILLAR OF SALT — By salt had she sinned and by salt was she punished. He (Lot) said to her once: “Give a little salt to these strangers” and she answered him, “Do you mean to introduce this bad custom, also, into our city?” (Genesis Rabbah 50:4).

Verse 27

Verse 28

קיטר signifies a column of smoke. old French torche; English torch.
הכבשן A FURNACE — an excavation in which they burn stone to lime. This is the meaning of כבשן wherever it occurs in the Torah.

Verse 29

ויזכר אלהים את אברהם GOD REMEMBERED ABRAHAM — What bearing has God’s remembering Abraham upon the rescue of Lot? He remembered that Lot knew that Sarah was Abraham’s wife and that when he heard that Abraham said in Egypt regarding Sarah, “She is my sister”, he did not betray him because he had sympathy with him. For this reason God had mercy upon him (Lot) (Genesis Rabbah 51:6).

Verse 30

כי ירא לשבת בצוער FOR HE FEARED TO DWELL IN ZOAR, because it was near to Sodom.

Verse 31

אבינו זקן OUR FATHER IS OLD — And if not now, when? He may die or may cease to beget children.
ואיש אין בארץ AND THERE IS NOT A MAN IN THE EARTH — They thought that the whole world had been destroyed as in the time of the generation of the Flood. (Genesis Rabbah 51:8).

Verse 32

Verse 33

ותשקין וגו' AND THEY MADE THEIR FATHER DRINK [WINE] etc. — Wine was at hand for them in the cave out of a set purpose that they might bring forth two nations (Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 12).
ותשכב את אביה AND SHE LAY WITH HER FATHER — In the case of the younger daughter it is written (Genesis 19:35) "and she lay with him", and it does not state "she lay with her father". But because the younger did not originate this unchaste conduct but her sister taught it to her, Scripture glosses over her sin and does not explicitly make mention of her shame; but since the elder originated this unchaste conduct Scripture exposes her fully (Numbers Rabbah 20:23).
ובקומה NOR WHEN SHE AROSE — This word where it occurs with reference to the elder sister (Genesis 19:33) has dots above it (as though it is not written at all), implying that when she arose, he (Lot) was aware of it, and yet he did not take care on the second night to abstain from wine. (Horayot 10b.) R. Levi said, Whoever is inflamed by sexual desire will, in the end, be made to eat his own flesh (Genesis Rabbah 51:9).

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

ותהרין וגו AND THEY BECAME PREGNANT, ETC. — Even though a woman does not become pregnant from the first intercourse, these [women] mastered themselves and took out their hymens; and they became pregnant from the first intercourse (Genesis Rabbah 51:9).

Verse 37

מואב MOAB — This daughter who was immodest openly proclaimed that the son was born of her father (מֵאָב) but the younger named her child in a euphemistic fashion and was rewarded for this at the time of Moses, as it is said regarding the children of Ammon, (Deuteronomy 2:19) "Do not contend with them" — in any manner at all — whereas in reference to Moab it (Scripture) only forbade waging war against them but permitted them (the Israelites) to vex them (Genesis Rabbah 51:11).

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

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Verse 70

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Verse 76

Verse 77

Verse 78

Verse 79

Verse 80

Chapter 20

Verse 1

וַיִּסַּע מִשָּׁם אַבְרָהָם AND ABRAHAM JOURNEYED FROM THENCE—When he observed that the cities had been destroyed and travellers ceased to pass to and fro, he went away from there. Another explanation is: he journeyed from there to get away from Lot who had gained an evil reputation because of his intercourse with his daughters (Genesis Rabbah 52:3-4).

Verse 2

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם AND ABRAHAM SAID — This time he did not ask her consent but forcibly and against her inclination he stated that she was his sister, because she had already been taken once to Pharaoh's house on account of this (Genesis Rabbah 52:4).
אֶל שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ OF SARAH HIS WIFE — means in reference to (אֶל in sense of עַל) just as (1 Samuel 4:21) "in reference to (אל) the ark of God being taken,

and in reference to (אל) her father-in-law", where the word אל, in both cases, has the same meaning as על.

Verse 3

Verse 4

לא קרב אליה HE HAD NOT COME NEAR HER — The Angel prevented him, as it is said (v. 6) "I have not permitted thee to touch her" (cf. Genesis Rabbah 52).
הגוי גם צדיק תהרוג WILT THOU SLAY ALSO A RIGHTEOUS NATION? — Even though it be righteous will you slay it? Is such perhaps Your usual way— to destroy nations without cause? That is what you did to the generation of the Flood and to the generation of the Dispersal. I may indeed say that you slew them without proper cause, just as you think to kill me without cause (Genesis Rabbah 52:6).

Verse 5

גם הוא ALSO SHE HERSELF — The word "also" presupposes that others also said the same: it serves to include her servants, cameldrivers and assdrivers — all these I asked and they told me, "He is her brother" (Genesis Rabbah 52:6).
בתם לבבי IN THE INTEGRITY OF MY HEART —I did not intend to sin.
ובנקיון כפי AND IN THE INNOCENCY OF MY HANDS —I am innocent of this sin because I have not touched her.

Verse 6

ידעתי כי בתם לבבך וגו' I KNOW THAT IN THE INTEGRITY OF THY HEART etc. — It is true that at first you had no intention of sinning, but you cannot claim innocency of hands (Genesis Rabbah 52:6) —
because לא נתתיך I PERMITTED THEE NOT — It was not of your own will that you did not touch her, but it was "I" who withheld you from sinning, and "I" did not permit you the possibility to touch her (Genesis Rabbah 52:7). Similar examples of נתן in sense of permitting are, (31:7) "God permitted him not (לא נתנו)" and (Judges 15:1) "But her father did not permit him (ולא נתנו) to go in".

Verse 7

השב אשת האיש RESTORE THE MAN'S WIFE and do not think that she will be repulsive in his eyes and that he will not take her back or that he will hate you and will not pray for you
כי נביא הוא FOR HE IS A PROPHET and he knows that you have not touched her (Genesis Rabbah 52:8); therefore—ויתפלל בעדך HE WILL PRAY FOR THEE.

Verse 8

Verse 9

מעשים אשר לא יעשו THINGS THAT OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE — A plague such as does not ordinarily fall upon human beings has come upon us through you, viz, the closing up of all the secretory channels — those of semen, urine, excrement, of the ears and the nose (cf. Bava Kamma 92a).

Verse 10

Verse 11

רק אין יראת אלהים SURELY THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD — When a stranger arrives in a city do people ask him about what he would like to eat or to drink, or do they ask him about his wife—"Is this your wife?" or "Is this your sister?" (Bava Kamma 92a) (Surely if they ask at all, it is about his needs; if they ask regarding his relationship to the lady accompanying him, it is evidence that they are not God-fearing people!)

Verse 12

אחותי בת אבי היא SHE IS MY SISTER, THE DAUGHTER OF MY FATHER — And the daughter of the same father is permitted to be married to a descendant of Noah, for the paternal relationship is not taken into consideration in the case of the marriages between idolators (i.e. the "Sons of Noah"). He answered them in this way in order to bear out his former statement that she was his sister. If, however, you ask, "But was she not his brother's daughter? (see chapter 11:29, and so she was granddaughter of Terah, Abraham's father), then I reply, one's children's children are considered as one's own children. Thus, too, did he say to Lot, (13:8) "For we are brethren" (although the relationship was that of uncle and nephew, as here it was that of uncle and niece).
אך לא בת אמי BUT NOT THE DAUGHTER OF MY MOTHER — For Haran (her father was born of a different mother than Abraham (Bava Kamma 92a).

Verse 13

ויהי כאשר התעו אותי וגו' AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN GOD CAUSED ME TO WANDER etc. — Onkelos translates it in his own way, but it can be explained in another manner that is also appropriate: When the Holy One, blessed be He, brought me forth from my father's house to be a nomad, wandering from place to place, I knew that I would traverse places where there are wicked people ואמר לה זה חסדך AND so I SAID UNTO HER THIS IS THY LOVINGKINDNESS [WHICH THOU SHALT SHOW UNTO ME].
כאשר התעו WHEN GOD (CAUSED ME TO WANDER — The verb is in the plural. Do not be surprised at this for in many passages words denoting Godship or denoting Authority are grammatically treated as plural, e. g., (2 Samuel 7:23) "Whom God went (הלכו plural) to redeem"; (Deuteronomy 5:23) "the living (חיים adjective, plural) God"; (Joshua 24:19) "a Holy (קדושים adjective, plural) God". So, too, the idea of Authority is expressed by the plural form, as (39:20) "And the master of (אדני construct plural) Joseph took him" and as (Deuteronomy 10:17) "Lord of (אדני) lords (האדנים)", and (42:30) "the lord of (אדני) the land"; as well as (Exodus 22:14) "if its owner (בעליו) be with it", and (Exodus 21:19) "and warning has been given to its master (בעליו)". If you ask why does it here use the term התעו, I reply, anyone who is exiled from his home and has no settled abode may be styled תועה a wanderer (or "one moving about aimlessly"), as (21:14) "And she, Hagar, went and strayed about (ותתע) in the wilderness"; (Psalms 119:176) "I have gone astray (תעיתי) like a lost sheep", and (Job 38:41) "they wander (יתעו) through lack of food", i.e. they go out and wander about to seek their food.
אמרי לי means say regarding me (the ל of לי signifies על); similar are: (26:7) "And the men of the place asked לאשתו" where לאשתו is the same as על אשתו regarding his wife; (Exodus 14:3) "And Pharaoh will say לבני ישראל" where לבני is the same as על בני ישראל; (Judges 9:54) "That men say not (לי) regarding me, a woman slew him".

Verse 14

ויתן לאברהם AND GAVE THEM UNTO ABRAHAM, so that he might he mollified and pray for him.

Verse 15

הנה ארצי לפניך BEHOLD MY LAND IS BEFORE THEE — But Pharaoh had said to him (12:19) "Behold thy wife, take her and go", because he feared for Sarah's safety since the Egyptians were addicted to lewd practices (see Rashi on this passage).

Verse 16

ולשרה אמר AND UNTO SARAH HE SAID — Abimelech said — out of respect for her and to mollify her: "Behold I have shown you this mark of respect, viz., I have given money to your brother — to him of whom thou didst say "he is my brother". הנה BEHOLD, this money and this evidence of respect לך כסות עינים לכל אשר אתך SHALL BE UNTO THEE A COVERING OF THY EYES TO ALL WHO ARE WITH THEE — these will put a covering over the eyes of all who are with thee so that they shall not hold you in light esteem. But had I sent you back empty-handed, they might have said, "After he abused her he sent her back"; now, however, that I have had to lavish money and to mollify you they will understand that I have sent you back against my own will forced to do so by a miracle.
ואת כל AND WITH ALL — means and with all people in the world.
ונכחת AND THOU MAYEST FACE EVERY ONE — You will have an opening of the mouth (an opportunity) to defend yourself (להתוכח) and to point to these evident facts. This expression יכח in the Hiphil means everywhere making a thing plain; in old French éprouver; English to prove. Onkelos translated in a different manner, and the words of the text fit in with the Targum in the following way: Behold this shall be to you as a veil of honour on account of my eyes which have gazed upon (literally, ruled over) you and upon all who are with you; and that is why he translates it by: "because that I saw you and your people that are with you". There are Midrashic explanations, but I have given the more exact meaning of the text.

Verse 17

וילדו AND THEY BROUGHT FORTH — Explain it as the Targum takes it: "and they were relieved" — their channels were opened (cf. 5:9) and they brought forth their secretions — and this is לידה "bringing forth", as far as they are concerned.

Verse 18

בעד כל רחם GOD HAD CLOSED UP EVERY רחם — means had closed up every opening (of the body)
'על דבר שרה וגו BECAUSE OF (literally, by the word of) SARAH — at Sarah's bidding (Genesis Rabbah 52:13).

Chapter 21

Verse 1

וה' פקד את שרה וגו' AND THE LORD VISITED SARAH —It (Scripture) places this section after the preceding one to teach you that whoever prays for mercy on behalf of another when he himself also is in need of that very thing for which he prays on the other's behalf, will himself first receive a favorable response from God, for it is said (at end of last chapter), "And Abraham prayed for Abimelech and his wife and they brought forth" and immediately afterwards it states here, "And the Lord remembered Sarah" — i. e. he had already remembered her before he healed Abimelech (Bava Kamma 92a).
פקד את שרה כאשר אמר HE REMEMBERED SARAH AS HE SAID — He remembered her by granting her pregnancy.
כאשר דבר [HE DID TO SARAH] AS HE HAD SPOKEN — by granting her the birth of a son (Pesikta). Where are the expressions "saying " and "speaking" used respectively in regard to these? "Saying" is mentioned in the verse (17:19) "And God said (ויאמר): "nay, but Sarah, thy wife" etc.; — "Speaking" is mentioned in (15:1) "And the word (דבר "speaking") of the Lord came to Abraham", and this was when He made the Covenant between the Pieces where it was stated, "This man (Eliezer) shall not be thine heir, [but one who shall be born from thee shall be thine heir]," and He brought forth this heir from Sarah.
וישע ה' לשרה כאשר דבר AND THE LORD DID UNTO SARAH AS HE HAD SPOKEN — means, spoken to Abraham.

Verse 2

למועד אשר דבר אתו Render it as Onkelos translates: "At the appointed time which He had spoken: — the time He had said and appointed. When He had said to him (18:4) "At the set time I will return unto thee", He scratched a mark in the wall and said to him (Genesis 53:6), "When the sunrays touch this mark next year she will bear a son" (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 59:1).
In his old age. That his [Yitzchok's] facial features were similar to his [Avraham's].

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

יצחק לי means will rejoice on my account. The Midrashic statement is (Genesis Rabbah 53:8): Many barren women were remembered together with her, many sick were healed in that day, many prayers were answered with hers and there was great rejoicing in the world.

Verse 7

מי מלל לאברהם The word מי is used as an exclamation of praise alluding to the distinguished position of the Being spoken of. The sense therefore is: See, Who it is, and to what extent He keeps his promise! The Holy One, blessed be He, promises and performs!

מלל SAID — Scripture employs here an unusual expression and does not use דבר, said, because its numerical value (i. e. of מלל) is one hundred, signifying as much as: Who was it who spoke in reference to the end of one hundred years of Abraham's life (Genesis Rabbah 53:9).
הניקה בנים שרה THAT SARAH WILL HAVE SUCKLED CHILDREN. What is the force of the word "children", in the plural? On the feast-day princesses brought their children with them and she (Sarah) gave them suck, for these women said, "Sarah has not given birth to a son; she has brought into her house a foundling from the street" (Bava Metzia 87a).

Verse 8

ויגמל AND HE WAS WEANED — at the expiration of twenty- four months (Gittin 75b).
משתה גדול A GREAT FEAST — it is so designated because the great men of that generation were present at it (Genesis Rabbah 53:10) — Shem, Eber and Abimelech (Tanchuma Yashan, Vayishlach 23).

Verse 9

מצחק MAKING SPORT — This means worshipping idols, as it is said in reference of the Golden Calf, (Exodus 32:6) "And they rose up to make merry (לצחק)." Another explanation is that it refers to immoral conduct, just as you say in reference to Potiphar's wife, (Genesis 39:17) "To mock (לצחק) at me." Another explanation is that it refers to murder, as (2 Samuel 2:14) "Let the young men, I pray thee, arise and make sport (וישחקו) before us" (where they fought with and killed one another) From Sarah's reply — "for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son" — you may infer that he (Ishmael) was quarrelling with Isaac about the inheritance, saying, "I am the first-born and will, therefore, take a double portion". They went into the field and he (Ishmael) took his bow and shot arrows at him (Isaac), just as you say (Proverbs 26:18-19) "As a madman who casteth firebrands, [arrows and death] and says: I am only מצחק mocking" (Genesis Rabbah 53:11).

Verse 10

עם בני עם יצחק WITH MY SON, WITH ISAAC —For since this is my son, even though he were not as good as Isaac really is, or if he were as good a man as Isaac really is, even though he were not my son, this one (Ishmael) is not deserving of inheriting with him: how much less is he deserving of inheriting with my son, with Isaac — with one who possesses both these qualities (of being my son and of being the good man Isaac) (Genesis Rabbah 53:11).

Verse 11

על אדות בנו ON ACCOUNT OF HIS SON — because he heard that he had taken to degenerate ways (Exodus Rabbah 1:1). The real meaning, however, is because she (Sarah) had told him to send him away.

Verse 12

שמע בקולה HEARKEN UNTO HER VOICE — we may infer that Abraham was inferior to Sarah in respect of prophecy (Exodus Rabbah 1:1).

Verse 13

Verse 14

לחם וחמת מים BREAD AND A BOTTLE OF WATER — but not silver and gold, because he hated him for taking to degenerate ways (Exodus Rabbah 1:1).
ואת הילד AND THE CHILD — the child, too, he placed on her shoulder, for Sarah had cast an evil eye upon him, so that a fever seized him and he could not walk (Genesis Rabbah 53:13).
ותלך ותתע AND SHE WENT AND WANDERED — she reverted to the idol worship of her father's house (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 30).

Verse 15

ויכלו המים AND THE WATER WAS SPENT, because it is the nature of sick people to drink much (Genesis Rabbah 53:13).

Verse 16

מנגד means some distance away.
כמטחוי קשת AS IT WERE A BOWSHOT — about two bowshots (since the first word is really plural) (Genesis Rabbah 53:13). The word signifies shooting an arrow — we find it so used in the Mishna (Sanhedrin 46a). If you say that it should have been written כמטחי קשת (since the root is טחה) then I say that it is quite regular for a ו to be inserted in these forms as (Song 2:14) "in the clefts (בחגוי) of the rock", where בחגוי is of the same derivation as חגא in (Isaiah 19:17) "And the land of Judah shall become a breach (לחגא) to Egypt" and of the same derivation as יחוגו in (Psalms 107:27) "They reeled (וחוגו) to and fro and staggered like a drunken man". Similar, also, is (Psalms 65:6) "The ends of (קצוי) the earth" which is of the same derivation as,קצה, end.
ותשב מנגד SHE SAT AT A DISTANCE — (this is the second time that it is so said) — now that he came nearer to death she moved further away from him.

Verse 17

את קול הנער THE VOICE OF THE LAD — From this we may infer that the prayer of a sick person is more effective than the prayer offered by others for him and that it is more readily accepted (Genesis Rabbah 53:14).
באשר הוא שם WHERE HE IS — According to the actions he is now doing shall he be judged and not according to what he may do in future. Because the ministering angels laid information against him, saying, "Master of the Universe, for him whose descendants will at one time kill your children with thirst will You provide a well?" He asked them, "What is he now, righteous or wicked?" They replied to him, "Righteous." He said to them, "According to his present deeds will I judge him." This is the meaning of what is written: "[For God hath heard the voice of the lad] באשר הוא שם in that condition in which he now is" (Genesis Rabbah 53:14). Where did he (Ishmael) kill Israel with thirst? When Nebuchadnezzar carried them into exile — as it is said, (Isaiah 21:13, 14) "The burden upon Arabia … O ye caravans of Dedanites, unto him that is thirsty bring ye water! etc." When they were bringing them near the Arabians the Israelites said to their captors, "We beg of you bring us to the children of our uncle, Ishmael, who will certainly show pity to us", as it is said, "O ye caravans of the Dedanites (דדנים)"; read not דדנים but דודים, kinsmen. — These indeed came to them bringing them salted meat and fish and water-skins inflated with air. The Israelites believed that these were full of water and when they placed them in their mouths, after having opened them, the air entered their bodies and they died (Eichah Rabbah 2:4).

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

רבה קשת AN ARCHER — One who shoots arrows by a bow.
(This is the explanation of רבה קַשָּׁת he is so designated after his occupation, that of a bow-man — just as חַמָּר denotes one who is an ass driver, גַּמָּל a camel driver, צַיָּד a huntsman; consequently the ש has a Dagesh (which distinguishes all these forms). — He used to live in the wilderness and rob travelers. It is to this the statement refers, (15:12) ידו בכל "his hand shall be against everyone, etc."

Verse 21

מארץ מצרים FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT — from the place where she was brought up — as it is said (16:1) "And she (Sarah) had an Egyptian handmaid [whose name was Hagar]". That is what the popular proverb says: "Throw a stick into the air and it will fall back to (literally, stand on) its element" (Genesis Rabbah 53:15).

Verse 22

אלהים עמך GOD IS WITH THEE — They said this because they saw that he had left the locality of Sodom safely, that he had fought against the kings and that they had fallen into his hand, and that his wife had been remembered in his old age (Genesis Rabbah 54:2).

Verse 23

ולנכדי ולניני NOR WITH MY SON NOR WITH MY SON'S SON — thus far extends a man's pity for his descendants (Genesis Rabbah 54:2).
כחסד אשר עשיתי עמך תעשה עמדי ACCORDING TO THE KINDNESS THAT I HAVE DONE UNTO THEE THOU SHALT DO UNTO ME — viz., that I said to you. (Genesis 20:15) "Behold my land is before thee".

Verse 24

Verse 25

והוכח AND [ABRAHAM] REPROVED — it means he argued with him about it.

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

בעבור (supply the word זאת) — IN ORDER THAT this (where this, a feminine form in a neuter sense, as is usual in Hebrew, refers to the incident just recorded).
תהיה לי לעדה MAY BE UNTO ME AS A WITNESS The word עדה means witness in reference to a previous feminine form (in this case to זאת, this, which word Rashi supplied), just as (31:52) "And the pillar is a witness" (עדה the feminine form to correspond with the feminine noun מצבה, whereas the preceding words are עד הגל הזה "this heap is a witness" where עד is masc to agree with Gal.
כי חפרתי את הבאר THAT I HAVE DIGGED THIS WELL —Abimelech's herdsmen quarrelled about it, saying, "We have dug it". They arranged amongst themselves that the well should belong to him who would show himself at the well together with his sheep and at whose approach the waters would rise, and they rose at the approach of Abraham and his sheep (Genesis Rabbah 54:5).

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

אשל [AND ABRAHAM PLANTED AN] אשל — Rab and Samuel differ as to what this was. One said it was an orchard from which to supply fruit for the guests at their meal. The other said it was an inn for lodging in which were all kinds of fruit (Sotah 10a). And we can speak of planting an inn for we find the expression planting used of tents, as it is said, (Daniel 11:45) "And he shall plant the tents of his palace".
ויקרא שם וגו' AND HE CALLED THERE etc. — Through this Eshel the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, was called "God of the entire Universe". For after they had eaten and drunk he said to them, "Bless Him of whose possessions you have eaten! Do you think that you have eaten of what is mine? You have eaten of that which belongs to Him Who spake and the Universe came into existence" (Sotah 10a).

Verse 34

ימים רבים MANY DAYS (or, MORE DAYS) — More than those he sojourned in Hebron: in Hebron he had stayed 25 years and here 26. For he was 75 years old when he left Haran (Genesis 12:4), and of that same year it is said (Genesis 13:18) "And he came and dwelt by the terebinths of Mamre [which are in Hebron]" — for we do not find that he had settled down anywhere prior to settling there (at Hebron), since in every place where he went he was only like a traveller who pitches his camp and then goes on journeying, as it is said, (Genesis 13:12:6) "And Abraham passed on"; (Genesis 12:8) "And Abraham removed from thence"; (Genesis 12:10) "And there was a famine in the land and Abraham went down to Egypt". In Egypt, too, he stayed only three months, for Pharaoh sent him away (Genesis 12:20). Immediately (Genesis 13:3) "He went on his journeys" until (Genesis 13:18) "He came and dwelt by the terebinths of Mamre which are in Hebron". There he resided until Sodom was overthrown, and immediately

afterwards (Genesis 20:1) “Abraham journeyed from thence” on account of the shame he felt at Lot’s doings and came to the land of the Philistines. He was then 99 years old, because it was on the third day of his circumcision that the angels came to him. Consequently you have 25 years from the time he settled in Hebron (the year he left his father’s house) until he came to the land of the Philistines. Now, here it is written that he sojourned in the land of the Philistines ימים רבים more days, which means more than the preceding days in Hebron. Scripture does not intend by these words to leave the number indefinite, but to state it explicitly, for if the “more days” exceeded the former period in Hebron by two years or more, it would have said so plainly, so that you must admit that the excess was only one year — that gives 26 years in the land of the Philistines. He immediately left there and returned to Hebron, and that year was 12 years before the Binding of Isaac. All this is explained in Seder Olam (See Note on Genesis 10:25).

Chapter 22

Verse 1

אחר הדברים האלה AFTER THESE THINGS [or, WORDS] —Some of our Rabbis say (Sanhedrin 89b) that it means after the words of Satan who denounced Abraham saying, “Of all the banquets which Abraham prepared not a single bullock nor a single ram did he bring as a sacrifice to You ’. God replied to him, “Does he do anything at all except for his son’s sake? Yet if I were to bid him, “Sacrifice him to Me’’, he would not refuse’’. Others say that it means “after the words of Ishmael” who boasted to Isaac that he had been circumcised when he was thirteen years old without resisting. Isaac replied to him, “You think to intimidate me by mentioning the loss of one part of the body! If the Holy One, blessed be He, were to tell me, “Sacrifice yourself to Me” I would not refuse” (Sanhedrin 89b).
הנני HERE AM I — Such is the answer of the pious: it is an expression of meekness and readiness (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 22).

Verse 2

נא קח TAKE NOW — The word נא is used as a request: God said to him, “I beg of you, stand firm for me in this trial, so that people may not say that the previous trials were no real tests” (Sanhedrin 89b).
את בנך THY SON — Abraham said to God, “I have two sons”. “He answered him, “Thine only son”. Abraham said, “This one is the only son of his mother and the other is the only son of his mother”. God then said, “the one whom thou lovest”. Abraham replied, “I love both of them”. Whereupon God said “even Isaac”. Why did He not disclose this to him at the very first? So as not to confuse him suddenly lest his mind become distracted and bewildered and in his confused state he would involuntarily consent, when there would have been no merit in his sacrifice, and so that he might more highly value God’s command and that God might reward him for the increasing sacrifice demanded by obedience to each and every expression used here (Genesis Rabbah 55:7).
ארץ המוריה THE LAND OF MORIAH — This is Jerusalem, and so we find in Chronicles (2 Chronicles 3:1) “To build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah”. Our Rabbis have explained that it is called Moriah — Instruction — because from it (i.e. from the Temple built on that mountain) instruction הוראה came forth to Israel (Genesis Rabbah 55:7). Onkelos translates it by “the land of the Divine Service”. He

takes it as having reference to the offering of incense brought in the Temple on Moriah in which there were myrrh (מור) nard and other spices.
והעלהו AND OFFER HIM (literally, bring him up) — He did not say, "Slay him", because the Holy One, blessed be He, did not desire that he should slay him, but he told him to bring him up to the mountain to prepare him as a burnt offering. So when he had taken him up, God said to him, "Bring him down" (Genesis Rabbah 56:8).
אחד ההרים ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS — The Holy One, blessed be He, first makes the righteous expectant and only afterwards discloses fully to them his intention — and all this in order to augment their reward. Similarly we have (Genesis 12:1) "[Go to] the land which I will show thee", and similarly in the case of Jonah 3:2 "Make unto it the proclamation which I shall bid thee" (Genesis Rabbah 55:7).

Verse 3

וישכם AND HE ROSE EARLY — He was alert to fulfil the command (Pesachim 4a)
ויחבוש AND HE SADDLED [HIS ASS]—He himself: he did not order one of his servants to do so, for love disregards the rule imposed on one by his exalted position in life. ("Love" here means Love of God as displayed in obedience to His command.) (Genesis Rabbah 55:8)
את שני נעריו HIS TWO LADS — Ishmael and Eliezer. For a man of high standing should not travel without two men as attendants (Leviticus Rabbah 26:7) so that if one needs to ease himself and goes aside for this purpose the other will still remain with him (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 8)
ויבקע AND HE CLEAVED [THE WOOD] — Its rendering in the Targum וצלח has the same meaning as the verb in (2 Samuel 19:18) And they rushed into the Jordan", which signifies cleaving the waters; old French fendre; English to split.

Verse 4

ביום השלישי ON THE THIRD DAY — Why did God delay and not show it to him at once? So that people should not say, "He confused and confounded him suddenly and bewildered his mind. If, however, he had had time for consideration, he would not have obeyed" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 22).
וירא את המקום AND HE SAW THE PLACE — He saw a cloud lowering over the mountain (Genesis Rabbah 56:1).

Verse 5

עד כה YONDER — meaning a short distance: to the place in front of us. The Midrashic explanation (based upon the meaning of כה "thus") is: I will see where will be (i.e. what will happen to) the promise which God made to me, (Genesis 15:5) "Thus (כה) shall thy seed be" (Genesis Rabbah 56:2).
ונשובה AND WE WILL COME BACK — He prophesied that they would both return (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 22).

Verse 6

המאכלת — means a knife. It is called מאכלת from אכל to eat, because it devours the meat, — just as you say, (Deuteronomy 32:42 "And my sword shall devour (תאכל) flesh"— or because it makes animal flesh fit for eating (מאכלת) (by killing the animal; because while the animal is living its flesh is unfit for eating). Another explanation: זאת נקראת This knife is called מאכלת (and the term is never used of an ordinary knife) because Israel still eats of the reward given for it (Genesis Rabbah 56:3).

וילכו שניהם יחדיו AND THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER — Abraham who was aware that he was going to slay his son walked along with the same willingness and joy as Isaac who had no idea of the matter.

Verse 7

Verse 8

יראה לו השה — this means as much as: He will look out for and choose a lamb for Himself, and if there will be no lamb for a burnt offering, then, בני MY SON will be the offering. Although Isaac then understood that he was travelling on to be slain, yet.
וילכו שניהם יחדיו THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER — with the same ready heart (Genesis Rabbah 56:4).

Verse 9

ויעקד AND HE BOUND his hands and feet behind him. Hands and feet tied together is what is meant by עקידה "binding". It is associated in meaning with עקודים in (Genesis 30:35) "[she-goats] that were streaked" — whose ankles were streaked white so that the place where they are bound could be plainly seen.

Verse 10

Verse 11

אברהם אברהם ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM — The repetition of his name is an expression of affection (Genesis Rabbah 56:7).

Verse 12

אל תשלח LAY NOT THINE HAND [UPON THE LAD] to slay him. Then he (Abraham) said to God, "If this be so, I have come here for nothing; let me at least inflict a wound on him and draw some blood from him". God replied, "Neither do thou anything (מאומה) to him" — inflict no blemish (מום) on him (Genesis Rabbah 56:7).
כי עתה ידעתי FOR NOW I KNOW—R. Aba said: Abraham said to God, "I will lay my complaint before you. Yesterday (on an earlier occasion) you told me, (Genesis 21:12) "In Isaac shall seed be called to thee", and then again you said, (Genesis 21:2) "Take now thy son". Now you tell me, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad"! The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, in the words of Psalms 89:35, "My covenant will I not profane, nor alter that which is gone out of My lips". When I told you, "Take thy son", I was not altering that which went out from My lips, namely, My promise that you would have descendants through Isaac. I did not tell you "Slay him" but bring him up to the mountain. You have brought him up — take him down again" (Genesis Rabbah 56:8).
כי עתה ידעתי FOR NOW I KNOW — From now I have a reply to give to Satan and to the nations who wonder at the love I bear you: I have an opening of the mouth (i.e. I have an excuse, a reason to give them) now that they see that you are a God-fearing man (Genesis Rabbah 56:7).

Verse 13

והנה איל BEHOLD, A RAM — It was predestined for that purpose from the six days of Creation (Avot 5:5; Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 23).
אחר AFTER the angel had said to him "Lay not thy hand upon the lad" he saw it being caught in the thicket. And that is what we mean when we translate it in the Targum by "And Abraham lifted up his eyes after these (i.e. after these words)". Other versions of Rashi have: according to the Midrashic explanation, after means after all the words of the angel and the Shechinah, and after all the arguments of Abraham.
בסבך IN A THICKET— a tree.
בקרניו BY ITS HORNS — because it was running towards Abraham, but Satan caused it to be caught and entangled among the trees (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 31).
תחת בנו IN THE STEAD OF HIS SON — Since it is written, "He offered it up for a burnt offering", surely nothing is missing in the text; what then is the force of "in the stead of his son"? At every sacrificial act he performed on it he prayed saying, "May it be Thy will that this act may be regarded as having been done to my son — as though my son is being slain; as though his blood is being sprinkled; as though his skin were being flayed; as though he is being burnt and is being reduced to ashes" (Genesis Rabbah 56:9).

Verse 14

ה' יראה Its real meaning is as the Targum renders it: The Lord will choose and select for Himself this place to make His Shechinah reside in it and for sacrifices to be offered there.
אשר יאמר היום AS IT IS SAID TO THIS DAY — In the generations to come people will say of it," On this mountain the Holy One, blessed be He, shows Himself to His people."
היום THIS DAY — the future days, with the same meaning as עד היום הזה "even until this day" wherever it occurs in the entire Scriptures: that all future generations who read this passage will refer the phrase "even unto this day" to the day in which they live. The Midrashic explanation is: May God see this Binding of Isaac every year to forgive Israel and to save them from punishment, so that it may be said "in this day" — in all future generations — "there are seen in the mountain of the Lord" the ashes of Isaac heaped up as it were and serving as a means of atonement (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 23).

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

ברך אברכך I WILL SURELY BLESS THEE — The double use of the term "bless" is intended to signify a blessing for the father and a blessing for the son (Genesis Rabbah 56:11).
והרבה ארבה AND I WILL GREATLY MULTIPLY— once for the father, and once for the son (Genesis Rabbah 56:11).

Verse 18

Verse 19

וישב אברהם בבאר שבע AND ABRAHAM DWELT AT BEER-SHEBA — This does not mean really dwelling there but merely staying there on his way home, because he was, as a matter of fact, living at Hebron. Twelve years before the Binding of Isaac he had left Beer-Sheba and had gone to Hebron, as it is said, (21:34) ''And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days", i.e. exceeding in number the earlier days when he had resided at Hebron — altogether 26 years, as we have explained above (21:34).

Verse 20

אחרי הדברים האלה AFTER THESE THINGS [IT WAS TOLD ABRAHAM] etc. — When he returned from Mount Moriah Abraham was pondering and he said, "If my son had really been slain, he would have died without children! I must marry him to one of the daughters of Aner or Eshcol or Mamre". The Holy One, blessed be He, therefore had the announcement made to him that Rebecca, the one fit to be his (Isaac's) consort, had been born. This is what is meant by "after these things or words" — namely, "after the words" that expressed the thoughts aroused by the Binding of Isaac (Genesis Rabbah 57:3).
גם היא SHE ALSO — She also had a number of families equal in all respects to those which Abraham was to have — namely, twelve, and just as in the case of Abraham, of the twelve tribes born of Jacob) eight were the children of the principal wives and four those of the hand-maids, so here, also, eight were sons of the principal wife and four were sons of the concubine (Genesis Rabbah 57:3).

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

ובתואל ילד את רבקה AND BETHUEL BEGAT REBECCA — The entire genealogical record is given only for the sake of this verse (i. e. to lead up to this verse).

Chapter 23

Verse 1

ויהיו חיי שרה מאה שנה ועשרים שנה ושבע שנים AND THE LIFE OF SARAH WAS 127 YEARS (literally, 100 years, 20 years and 7 years) — The reason the word שנה is written at every term is to tell you that each term must be explained by itself as a complete number: at the age of one hundred she was as a woman of twenty as regards sin — for just as at the age of twenty one may regard her as having never sinned, since she had not then reached the age when she was subject to punishment, so, too, when she was one hundred years old she was sinless — and when she was twenty she was as beautiful as when she was seven (Genesis Rabbah 58:1).
שני חיי שרה THE YEARS OF SARAH'S LIFE — The word years is repeated and without a number to indicate that they were all equally good.

Verse 2

בקרית ארבע literally, the city of the Four, and it was so called because of the four giants who lived there: Ahiman, Sheshai, Talmai and their father (Numbers 13:22). Another explanation is that it was so called because of the four couples who were buried there, man and wife — Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah (Genesis Rabbah 58:4).
ויבא אברהם AND ABRAHAM CAME from Beer-Sheba
לספוד לשרה ולבכותה TO BEWAIL SARAH AND TO WEEP FOR HER — The narrative of the death of Sarah follows immediately on that of the Binding of Isaac, because through the announcement of the Binding — that her son had been made ready for sacrifice and had almost been sacrificed — she received a great shock (literally, her soul flew from her) and she died (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 32).

Verse 3

Verse 4

גר ותושב אנכי עמכם I AM A STRANGER AND A SETTLER WITH YOU — A stranger having come from another land, but I have settled down amongst you. A Midrashic explanation is: if you agree to sell me the land then I will regard myself as a stranger and will pay for it, but if not, I shall claim it as a settler and will take it as my legal right, because the Holy One, blessed be He, said to me, (12:7) "Unto thy seed I give this land" (Genesis Rabbah 58:6).
אחזת קבר A POSSESSION OF A BURYING PLACE — means possession of land to serve as a burying place.

Verse 5

Verse 6

לא יכלה means will not withhold, just as (Psalms 40:12) "Thou wilt not withhold (תכלא) Thy mercies", and (Genesis 8:2) "And the rain was restrained (ויכלא).

Verse 7

Verse 8

נפשכם means YOUR WILL.
ופגעו לי — This phrase signifies entreaty, as (Ruth 1:16) "Do not entreat (תפגעי) me".

Verse 9

המכפלה MACHPELAH (the root, כפל, means double) — it had a lower and an upper cavern. Another explanation of why it was so called is, because it has the characteristic of being doubled on account of the couples who are buried there (see Rashi in verse 2) (Eruvin 53a).
בכסף מלא FOR ITS FULL VALUE IN SILVER — מלא means שלם so that the phrase means all that it is worth. Thus, too, did David say to Ornan, (1 Chronicles 21:22) "for full money".

Verse 10

ועפרון ישב The verb is written without a ו so that it may be read ישב he sat, thus indicating that on that very day they had appointed him (Ephron) to be an officer over them. Because of the high standing of Abraham who needed to negotiate with him, he was elevated to a dignified position (so that Abraham whom they esteemed as a great prince might have to negotiate with an equal and not with an inferior person (Genesis Rabbah 58:7).
לכל באי שער עירו OF ALL THAT CAME IN AT THE GATE OF HIS CITY — for they all left their work and came to pay their last respect to Sarah (Genesis Rabbah 58:7).

Verse 11

לא אדני NAY, MY LORD — You are not to buy it with money.
נתתי לך I HAVE GIVEN IT TO THEE (a perfect tense) — See, it is as though I have already given it to you.

Verse 12

Verse 13

אך אם אתה לו שמעני BUT IF THOU WOULDST ONLY HEAR ME — You tell me to listen to you (verse 11) and to accept it without payment. I do not desire this:
BUT IF THOU WOULDST ONLY HEAR ME!—i.e. I only wish that you would listen to me and do as I ask.
נתתי I GIVE (perfect with present sense) old French donne; English I give. I have the money ready and I only wish that I had already given it to you.

Verse 14

Verse 15

ביני וביניך BETWEEN ME AND THEE — Between two such friends as we are, of what importance is that? Nothing at all! Leave business alone and bury your dead!

Verse 16

וישקל אברהם לעפרן AND ABRAHAM WEIGHED TO EPHRON [THE SILVER] — The name Ephron is written defectively (without the ו) to indicate that there was something missing in Ephron viz, sincerity — because he promised much but did not do even the very least (Bava Metzia 87a): He took from him big Shekels, viz., centenaria (worth a full 100 smaller units) as it is said, “money current with the merchant” which means, such coins as were everywhere accepted as worth a full Shekel — for there are places where their Shekels are of large size, centenaria; old French Centenars (cf. Ruth R. 7).

Verse 17

ויקם שדה עפרון AND THE FIELD OF EPHRON WAS MADE SURE (literally, it rose) — It received a rise in importance because it passed from the possession of a commoner (הדיוט an ordinary person) into the possession of a king (Genesis Rabbah 58:8). But the real meaning of the verse is: The field and the cave that was therein and all the trees … became secured to Abraham as a possession etc. (i. e. verse 17 is an incomplete sentence and must be read together with verse 18, thus: ויקם השדה וגו… לאברהם למקנה —The field etc. became secured to Abraham as a possession).

Verse 18

בכל באי שער עירו BEFORE ALL THAT CAME IN AT THE GATE OF HIS CITY — In the midst of all them, and with all of them standing by he gave him legal possession of it.

Chapter 24

Verse 1

ברך את אברהם בכל [THE LORD HAD] BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS — The numerical value of the word בכל is equal to that of בן (a son) — suggesting that God had blessed Abraham with a son and since he had a son he had to find him a wife.

Verse 2

זקן ביתו THE ELDER OF HIS HOUSE — Because the noun is in the construct state the ק is punctuated with a Patach.
תחת ירכי UNDER MY THIGH — because whoever takes an oath must take in his hand some sacred object. such as a Scroll of the Law or Tefillin (Shevuot 38b). As circumcision was the first commandment given to him and became his only through much pain it was consequently dear to him and therefore he selected this as the object upon which to take the oath (Genesis Rabbah 59:8).

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

ה אלהי השמים אשר לקחני מבית אבי' THE LORD, GOD OF HEAVEN, WHO TOOK ME FROM MY FATHER'S HOUSE — Here he did not say "[The God of heaven] and the God of the earth", whereas above (v. 3) he said, "And I will make thee swear etc. … [and the God of the earth]''. But, in effect, Abraham said to him: Now He is the God of heaven and the God of the earth, because I

have made him (i. e. His Name) a familiar one in peoples' mouths: but at the time when He took me from my father's house He was God of heaven only and not God of the earth for people did not acknowledge Him and His Name was not commonly known on earth (Genesis Rabbah 59:7).
מבית אבי FROM MY FATHER S HOUSE — from Haran.
ומארץ מולדתי AND FROM THE LAND OF MY NATIVITY — from Ur-Kasdim.
ואשר דבר לי AND WHO SPOKE לי—The word לי means "in my interest", just as (1 Kings 2:4) "which He spake concerning me (עלי)". In the same way, in every case where לי or לו or להם follow after the verb דבר they must be explained in the sense of על "concerning" — and in the Targum they should be rendered by עלי or עלוהי or עליהון regarding me etc. — for with this verb דבר in the sense of speaking to a person, the expressions לי and לו and להם are not the appropriate ones, but אלי and אליו and אליהן, and their renderings in the Targum should be עמי and עמיה and עמהן i. e., to speak with me or him or them. In the case of the verb אמר, however, the expressions לי and לו and להם are the appropriate ones.
ואשר נשבע לי AND WHO SWORE UNTO ME at the Covenant between the Pieces (Genesis Rabbah 59:10).

Verse 8

ונקית משבעתי וגו' THEN SHALT THOU BE CLEAR FROM THIS MY OATH etc. — and take a wife for him from the daughters of Aner or Eshcol or Mamre.
רק את בני וגו ONLY [BRING NOT] MY SON [THITHER] etc. — The word רק narrows and limits (מעוט) the sense: it is only my son who may not go back there, but Jacob, my son's son, in the end will go back there to find a wife (Genesis Rabbah 59:10).

Verse 9

Verse 10

מגמלי אדניו OF HIS MASTER'S CAMELS — These were distinguished from other camels by going out muzzled to avoid robbery — i.e. that they should not graze in other peoples' fields (Genesis Rabbah 59:11).
וכל טוב אדניו בידו AND ALL THE GOODS OF HIS MASTER WERE IN HIS HAND — He wrote a deed of gift of all his possessions in favour of Isaac so that they would be eager to send him their daughter (Genesis Rabbah 59:11).
ארם נהרים MESOPOTAMIA (literally, ARAM OF THE TWO RIVERS) — it was situated between the two rivers, Euphrates and Tigris.

Verse 11

ויברך הגמלים means HE MADE THEM KNEEL (Genesis Rabbah 59:11).

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

אתה הכחת HER THOU HAST APPOINTED — She is fit for him since she will be charitable and will therefore be worthy of admission into the house of

Abraham. The word הכחת means selected; old French approuvest; English thou hast selected.
ובה אדע This is a petition: "Let me know through her".
כי עשית חסד THAT THOU HAST SHOWN KINDNESS — if she is of his family and a fit companion for him I shall know that thou hast shown kindness to my master.

Verse 15

Verse 16

בתולה A VIRGIN — from the place of her hymen.
ואיש לא ידעה AND A MAN DID NOT KNOW HER — not in its way (meaning, anally). Because the daughters of the nations would guard the place of their hymens, but abandon themselves from another place. It testifies about this one that she was clean from all [of this] (Genesis Rabbah 60:5).

Verse 17

וירץ העבד לקראתה AND THE SERVANT RAN TOWARDS HER — because he saw that the waters rose in the well when she approached it (Genesis Rabbah 60:5).
הגמיאיני נא GIVE ME TO DRINK, I PRAY THEE — the word means sipping; old French humer.

Verse 18

ותרד כדה SHE LET DOWN HER PITCHER from off her shoulder.

Verse 19

עד אם כלו literally, UNTIL THAT THEY HAVE FINISHED [DRINKING] — Here the word אם is used in the sense of אשר "that". The words אם כלו the Targum renders by "That they have done enough drinking". Though the verb כלה signifies to finish, to end, the Targum is right in translating it thus for this is the end of their drinking when they have drunk as much as they wanted (cf. Rashi on Genesis 43:2).

Verse 20

ותער AND SHE EMPTIED — It means "pouring out". It occurs in this sense many times in the Mishna; e. g., (Avodah Zarah 72a), "He who pours (הטערה) from one vessel into another", and we find it again in a similar sense in Biblical Hebrew: (Psalms 141:8) "O pour not out (תער) my soul", and (Isaiah 53:12) "Because he poured forth (הערה) his soul unto death"
השקת THE TROUGH — a hollowed-out stone from which the camels drink.

Verse 21

משתאה WAS WONDERING — The word really has the idea of being waste and desolate, as (Isaiah 6:11) "Until cities be waste (שאו) and the land become utterly desolate תשאה.
משתאה means he was astonished and perplexed, because he saw that what he had said was nearly successful only that he did not know whether she belonged to Abraham's family or not. Do not be puzzled by the ת in the word משתאה for you will find no word (verb) whose first root letter is ש where, when it is used in the Hithpael, the ת of the Hithpael-prefix does not come between the first two letters of the root, as e.g. משתאה (here)

and (Isaiah 59:15) משתולל of the same root as שולל, and (Isaiah 59:16) וישתומם of the same root as שממה and (Micha 6:16) "For the statutes of Omri are kept (וישתמר)" from the same root as וישמר —so, also, here משתאה is of the same root as תשאה. Now, just as you find the expression שמם (which really means waste and desolate) applied to a person who is perplexed and speechless (with amazement) and sunk in deep thought (about what is happening) — e. g., (Job 18:20) "They that come after shall be astonished (נשמו) at his day", and (Jeremiah 2:12) "Be astonished (שומו) ye heavens", and (Daniel 4:16) "He was appalled אשתומם for a time" — so too you may explain the expression שאה (which also really means waste and desolate) in all its verbal or noun forms as referring to a person who is perplexed and sunk deep in thought. Onkelos translates it in the sense of lingering — "the man lingered" — i. e. he wailed, standing on one spot, to see "whether God had made his journey prosperous". But one should not read in the Targum שתי in place of שהי, as the Targum of משתאה, (as evidently some versions of the Targum read), for the word משתאה certainly does not mean drinking, for א has no place in the Hebrew words which mean drinking root (שתה).
משתאה לה means he was wondering about her, just as the ל has the meaning "about" in (20:13) "Say of me (לי), he is my brother", and (26:7) "And the men of the place asked about his wife.

Verse 22

בקע BEKA (half a Shekel) — a symbol of the Shekels of the Israelites of which it is said (Exodus 38:26) "a Beka (half a Shekel) a head" (cf. Targum Jon).
ושני צמידים AND TWO BRACELETS (the word for bracelet signifies something joined or united) — a symbol of the two Tablets of stone, joined one to another (Genesis Rabbah 60:6).
עשרה זהב משקלם TEN SHEKELS OF GOLD WAS THEIR WEIGHT —a symbol of the Ten Commandments written on them (the Tablets) (Genesis Rabbah 60:6).

Verse 23

ויאמר בת מי את AND HE SAID, WHOSE DAUGHTER ART THOU? — He asked her this after he had given her these presents, for he was confident that, on account of the merit of Abraham, the Holy One blessed be He, had made his journey successful.
ללין TO LODGE IN — the word means one night's lodging. The word לין is a noun (of the same form as גיל,שיר). She however said (Genesis 24:25) ללון (a verb, "to lodge" generally) meaning many nights' lodging (Genesis Rabbah 60:6).

Verse 24

בת בתואל DAUGHTER OF BETHUEL — She answered his first question first and his last last (cf. Avot 5:9).

Verse 25

מספוא PROVENDER — All kinds of camels' food is called מספוא e. g., straw and barley.

Verse 26

Verse 27

בדרך [I BEING] IN THE WAY — The way i.e. the designated way — the right way — that way which I really required. In the same manner wherever ב or ל or ה are prefixed to a word and are punctuated with a Patach, they speak of some object that is quite definite in sense, having been already mentioned in another passage, or of some object where it is quite clear and evident about what one is speaking.

Verse 28

לבית אמה [AND TOLD IT] TO THEM OF HER MOTHER'S HOUSE — It was customary for the women to have their own apartments to sit in at their work — and a daughter, of course, confides only in her mother (Genesis Rabbah 60:7).

Verse 29

וירץ AND HE RAN — Why did he run and what did he run for? (The next verse explains why). ויהי כראות הנזם AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN HE SAW THE RING — he said, "This must be a rich man ", and he had an eye to his money.

Verse 30

על הגמלים [HE WAS STANDING] BY THE CAMELS — to look after them. The phrase is the same as (18:8) "And he (Abraham) stood by them עומד עליהם"— to wait on them.

Verse 31

פניתי הבית I HAVE CLEARED THE HOUSE of idols (Genesis Rabbah 60:7).

Verse 32

ויפתח HE UNGIRDED — He removed their muzzles, for he had closed their mouths by them so that on the journey they might not graze in other peoples' fields (Genesis Rabbah 60:8).

Verse 33

עד אם דברתי UNTIL THAT I HAVE SPOKEN — This is the same as עד אשר, so that you see that אם has the meaning of both אשר and כי, an example of the latter usage being (49:10) "Until that (עד כי) men come to Shiloh" (where עד כי is equivalent to עד אם in our verse). That is what our Sages, of blessed memory, have said (Rosh Hashanah 3a): The word כי is used in four meanings. One of these they say, is אי which is the Aramaic for the Hebrew word "im".

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

ויתן לו את כל אשר לו AND HE HATH GIVEN TO HIM ALL THAT HE HATH — he showed them the deed of gift.

Verse 37

לא תקח אשה לבני מבנות הכנעני THOU SHALT NOT TAKE A WIFE FOR MY SON FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CANAANITES if you do not first go to my father's house and to my family that thou mayest take a wife to my son and she will not be willing to follow you.

Verse 38

Verse 39

אלי לא תלך האשה PERADVENTURE THE WOMAN WILL NOT FOLLOW ME —The word אולי perhaps is written without ו so that it may be read אֵלַי unto me. Eliezer had a daughter and he was endeavouring to find some reason why Abraham should say that he must appeal to him (Eliezer) that he should give his daughter in marriage to Isaac. Abraham said to him, "My son is blessed and you are subject to a curse. One who is under a curse cannot unite with one who is blessed" (Genesis Rabbah 59:9).

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

ואבא היום AND I CAME THIS DAY — Today I started on my journey and today I have arrived here. Hence we may infer that the earth (the road) shrunk for him (i. e. that the journey was shortened in a miraculous manner) (Sanhedrin 95a). R. Acha said: The ordinary conversation of the patriarchs' servants is more pleasing to God than even the Torah (religious discourse) of their children, for the chapter of Eliezer (the account of his journey) is repeated in the Torah (i. e. it is written once as a narrative and again repeated as part of the conversation of the patriarch's servant) whereas many important principles of the Law are derived only from slight indications given in the Text (Genesis Rabbah 60:8).

Verse 43

Verse 44

גם אתה DRINK THOU ALSO — Her use of the word גם, also suggests that she intended to include the men who accompanied him.
הכיח means selected and designated. So, too, wherever this word (the Hiphil of יכח) occurs in the Scriptures it signifies "making something clear".

Verse 45

טרם אכלה means I WAS NOT YET FINISHING. Similarly in the case of every word that expresses an action contemporaneous with another Scripture sometimes uses the past tense — so that it might have written here טרם כִּלִּיתִי — and sometimes it uses the future tense. Examples are: (Job I. 5) "For Job was saying (אמר)" — here it is past tense and (ib.) "Thus was

Job doing (יעשה)" — here it is future tense. But the meaning of both of them is contemporaneous action: "for Job was saying (whilst he sacrificed) "Perhaps my sons have sinned etc." "and he was doing this" (whenever his sons feasted).

Verse 46

Verse 47

ואשם...ואשאל AND I ASKED HER... AND I PUT THE RING —He changed the order of proceedings for in fact he had first given the presents and afterwards questioned her. But he did this in order that they should not catch him by his own words and say, "How could you give her anything when you did not yet know who she was!"

Verse 48

Verse 49

על ימין TO THE RIGHT HAND — to take a wife of the daughters of Ishmael. על שמאל TO THE LEFT — to take a wife of the daughters of Lot who dwelt at the left of Abraham (Genesis Rabbah 60:9).

Verse 50

ויען לבן ובתואל THEN LABAN AND BETHUEL ANSWERED —He (Laban) was a wicked person and so rushed in to answer before his father.
לא נוכל דבר אליך WE CANNOT SPEAK UNTO THEE — refusing this proposition either by answering you with unpleasant words (i. e. a flat refusal) or by giving you a reasoned reply, for it is evident that the matter proceedeth from the Lord since, according to your statement, He brought her and you together.

Verse 51

Verse 52

וישתחו ארצה HE PROSTRATED HIMSELF — From this we may learn that we should thank God for good news (Genesis Rabbah 60:6).

Verse 53

ומגדנות PRECIOUS THINGS — it has the same meaning as מגדים (cf. Song 7:14) "precious fruits", for he had brought with him various kinds of fruit from the land of Israel (Genesis Rabbah 60:11).

Verse 54

וילינו AND LODGED OVER NIGHT — wherever the root לין occurs in Scripture it signifies staying for only one night.

Verse 55

ויאמר אחיה ואמה AND HER BROTHER AND HER MOTHER SAID —But where was Bethuel? He wished to prevent the marriage therefore an angel came and killed him (Genesis Rabbah 60:12).
ימים (literally, days) means a year — just as (Leviticus 25:29) "For a whole year (ימים) shall he have the right of redemption" — for the custom was to give a maiden twelve months to provide herself with a trousseau (literally, ornaments) (Genesis Rabbah 60:12).
או עשור OR TEN — i. e. ten months. But if you say that it does really mean "days" ("a few days", and that it does not mean a year) I reply that it is not usual for people who make a request to ask for a little and to say "If you do not agree to this, then give us even more" (Ketubot 57b).

Verse 56

Verse 57

ונשאלה את פיה AND ASK HER MOUTH — From this we may infer that a woman should not be given in marriage except with her own consent (Genesis Rabbah 60:12).

Verse 58

ותאמר אלך AND SHE SAID, I WILL GO — of my own accord even though you do not consent (Genesis Rabbah 60:12).

Verse 59

Verse 60

את היי לאלפי רבבה MAYEST THOU BECOME THOUSANDS OF MYRIADS —May you and your seed receive that blessing which was promised to Abraham on Mount Moriah, (Genesis 22:17) "I will greatly multiply thy seed … [and let thy seed possess the gates of their enemies]". May it be God's will that that seed may proceed from you and not from another woman".

Verse 61

Verse 62

מבוא באר לחי ראי HE HAD JUST COME FROM THE WELL LACHAI-ROI— For he had gone there to bring Hagar back to Abraham that he might take her again as his wife (Genesis Rabbah 60:14).
יושב בארץ הנגב FOR HE DWELT IN THE LAND OF THE SOUTH, near to that well, as it is said, (Genesis 20:1) "And Abraham journeyed from thence towards the land of the South and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur", and the well was there, as is said, (Genesis 16:14) "behold it is between Kadesh and Bered''.

Verse 63

לשוח TO MEDITATE — this means "to pray" (Genesis Rabbah 60:14), as we find (Psalms 102:1) "[A prayer of the afflicted …] when he poureth forth his plaint.

Verse 64

ותרא את יצחק AND SHE SAW ISAAC — She saw his lordly appearance and gazed at him in astonishment (Genesis Rabbah 60:15).
ותפל SHE ALIGHTED (literally, she fell) — She let herself slide towards the ground; as the Targum renders it וארכינת —she inclined herself towards the earth, but did not actually reach the ground. Similarly in (Genesis 24:14) "let down thy pitcher, I pray thee", the word הטי let down, Onkelos translates by ארכיני "incline", and (Psalm 18:10) "He bowed (ויט) the heavens" he translates by וארכין which means "He bent them towards the ground". A similar idea is (Psalms 37:24) "Though he fall (יפול) he shall not be utterly cast down" which is as much as to say, "though he bends himself towards the earth yet he shall not touch the ground (i. e. shall not fall entirely)" (Genesis Rabbah 60:15).

Verse 65

ותתכס AND [SHE] COVERED HERSELF — This has a passive meaning (she was covered); it is like (35:8) ותקבר "and she was buried", and (1 Samuel 4:18) ותשבר "and [his neck] was broken".

Verse 66

ויספר העבד AND THE SERVANT RELATED — He reported to him the miracles that had been wrought for him — how the earth had shrunk for him, and how Rebecca was ready for him in response to his prayer (Genesis Rabbah 60:15).

Verse 67

האהלה שרה אמו INTO HIS MOTHER SARAH'S TENT — He brought her into the tent and she became exactly like his mother Sarah — that is to say, the words signify as much as, [And he brought her into the tent] and, behold, she was Sarah, his mother). For whilst Sarah was living, a light had been burning in the tent from one Sabbath eve to the next, there was always a blessing in the dough (a miraculous increase) and a cloud was always hanging over the tent (as a divine protection), but since her death all these had stopped. However, when Rebecca came, they reappeared" (Genesis Rabbah 60:16).
אחרי אמו [AND ISAAC WAS COMFORTED] AFTER HIS MOTHER'S DEATH — It is natural that whilst a man's mother is living he is wrapped up in her, but when she dies he finds comfort in his wife (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 32).

Chapter 25

Verse 1

קטורה KETURAH — This is Hagar. She was named Keturah because her deeds were as beautiful (sweet) as incense (Ketoreth) (Genesis Rabbah 61). And since she closed her 'opening,' as she did not mate with anyone from the time she separated from Avraham (Genesis Rabbah 61:4).

Verse 2

Verse 3

אשורם ולטושם The names of chieftains of clans (Genesis Rabbah 61:5). As regards the translation of Onkelos I cannot make it fit in exactly with the words of the text. He explains אשורם by למשירין which means "camps" (cf. שיירא a caravan). If you say that this cannot be correct on account of the א in אשורם which is not a root letter in the word from which משירין is derived (whilst in אשורם we have an א) then I would reply that we find some words which should have no א at the beginning, but still א is placed before them. Such are אנך in (Amos 7:7) "a wall made by a plumbline (אנך)", where the word is of the same root as נכה in (2 Samuel 4:4) "stricken (נכה) in his feet", and אסוך, a cruse containing anointing oil, in (2 Kings 4:2) "a pot (אסוך) of oil" which is of the same root as וסכת in (Ruth 3:3) "wash thyself and (וסכת) annoint thyself".
The לטושים (according to Onkelos) are owners of tents who spread about in all directions and travel about each in the "tents of his palace" (Rashi uses a Biblical phrase (Daniel 11:45), but he means nothing more than "each in his own tent"). Indeed Scripture says (1 Samuel 30:16) "Behold they were spread (נטושים) over all the ground", for ל and נ may interchange (so that לטושים is equivalent to נטושים).

Verse 4

Verse 5

AND ויתן אברהם וגו AND ABRAHAM GAVE etc. — R. Nehemiah said, he gave him the blessing as a legacy (literally, will, testament). The Holy One, blessed be He, had said to Abraham (12:2) "Be thou a blessing" which means "the blessing are entrusted to you that you may bless whomsoever you please", and Abraham transferred them to Isaac (cf. Genesis Rabbah 61:6).

Verse 6

הפילגשים THE CONCUBINES — The word is written deficient, (without י, but our texts have a י in both places) because he had only one concubine, Hagar, who is identical with Keturah. Wives are those whom a man marries with a marriage-contract (Ketubah): concubines have no marriage contract, as we explain in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 21a) in reference to David's wives and concubines.
נתן אברהם מתנות ABRAHAM GAVE GIFTS — Our Rabbis explained (Sanhedrin 91a) that he transmitted to them the names of impure things. Another explanation is: all that he had received as gifts because of Sarah — and other gifts that people had given him — all these he gave to them because he did not wish to derive any benefit from these.

Verse 7

מאה שנה ושבעים שנה וחמש שנים A HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FIVE YEARS — (lit, a hundred years, and seventy years and five years) — at the age of one hundred years he was as strong as at seventy, and at the age of seventy he was as five — without sin.

Verse 8

Verse 9

יצחק וישמעאל ISAAC AND ISHMAEL — From this we gather that Ishmael repented of his evil ways (cf.Bava Batra 16b) and yielded the precedence to Isaac. This is what is meant by the "good old age" mentioned in connection with Abraham (Genesis Rabbah 38:12).

Verse 10

Verse 11

ויהי אחרי מות אברהם ויברך וגו AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM THAT GOD BLESSED ISAAC etc. — He comforted him with the words of the formula of consolation which we offer to mourners (Sotah 14a). Another explanation is: Although the Holy One, blessed be He, had entrusted the blessings to Abraham to bless whomever he wished yet he (Abraham) feared to bless Isaac, because he foresaw that Esau would be born from him. He therefore said, "Let the Master of the blessings come himself and bless whomever it seems proper in his eyes" — God came and blessed him (Isaac)(Genesis Rabbah 61:6).

Verse 12

Verse 13

בשמתם לתולדתם BY THEIR NAMES ACCORDING TO THEIR PROGENY — by the order in which they were born one after the other.

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

בחצריהם BY THEIR ENCLOSURES — Unwalled towns. In the Targum it is rendered by בפצחיהון because they are מפוצחים, which means "open"; similar in meaning to (Psalms 98:4) ''Open your mouths (פצחו) and sing for joy".

Verse 17

ואלה שני חיי ישמעאל וגו AND THESE ARE THE YEARS OF THE LIFE OF ISHMAEL etc. —R. Chija the son of Abba asked: Why are the years of Ishmael enumerated? In order to trace through them the years of Jacob (i. e. the years in which the various incidents of his life happened). Calculating from the age of Ishmael (when he died) we may learn that Jacob attended at the School of Eber for fourteen years after he left his father and before he arrived at Laban's house, for just when Jacob left his father Ishmael died, for it is said, (28:9) ''So Esau went to Ishmael etc.", as is explained in the Chapter Megilla Nikraath (Megillah 17a) (cf. Rashi on Genesis 28:9).
ויגוע AND HE EXPIRED — This expression — expiring — associated with a word denoting dying is only mentioned in the case of righteous people (Bava Batra 16b).

Verse 18

נפל (literally, he fell) means ''he dwelt", as (Judges 7:12) "Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all children of the East dwelt (נופלים) in the valley." Here it says "He fell" and there (16:12) it says "In the presence of all his brethren shall he dwell". But it may be explained thus: before Abraham died it could be said "He would dwell in security: after he died, "he fell" (Genesis Rabbah 62:5).

Verse 19

ואלה תולדות יצחק AND THESE ARE THE PROGENY OF ISAAC — viz, Jacob and Esau who are spoken of in this section.
אברהם הוליד את יצחק ABRAHAM BEGAT ISAAC — Just because Scripture wrote, "Isaac, son of Abraham" it felt compelled to say "Abraham begat Isaac", because the cynics of that time said, "Sarah became with child of Abimelech. See how many years she lived with Abraham without becoming with child". What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do? He shaped Isaac's facial features exactly similar to those of Abraham's, so that everyone had to admit that Abraham begat Isaac. This is what is stated here: that Isaac was the son of Abraham, for there is evidence that Abraham begat Isaac (Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 1).

Verse 20

בן ארבעים שנה FORTY YEARS OLD — For when Abraham came from Mount Moriah he received the news that Rebecca was born (22:20). Isaac was then thirty-seven years old, because at that time Sarah died and from the birth of Isaac until the Binding — when Sarah died — there were 37 years since she was 90 years old when Isaac was born and 127 when she died, as it is said, (23:1) "And the life of Sarah was [one hundred and twenty seven years]" — thus Isaac was then 37 years old. At that period Rebecca was born and he waited until she was fit for marriage — 3 years — and then married her (Seder Olam).
בת בתואל מפדן ארם אחות לבן THE DAUGHTER OF BETHUEL THE SYRIAN OF PADAN-ARAM, THE SISTER TO LABAN —Has it not already been written that she was the daughter of Bethuel and sister of Laban of Padanaram? But we are told these facts once more to proclaim her praise — she was the daughter of a wicked man, sister of a wicked man, and her native place was one of wicked people, and yet she did not learn from their doings (Genesis Rabbah 63:4).
מפדן ארם FROM PADAN-ARAM — Because there were two Arams — Aram-Naharaim (Mesopotamia) and Aram-Zoba — it is called Padan-aram, (Padan meaning pair). It has the same meaning as צמד in the phrase צמד בקר (Samuel 11:7) which we know signifies a pair of oxen and which is translated in the Targum by פדן תורין a Padan of oxen, so that we see that Padan means a pair. Some, however, explain Padan-aram to be the same as (Hosea 12:13) "the field (country) of Aram", because in the Arabic language a field is called Padan.

Verse 21

וַיֶּעְתַּר AND ISAAC ENTREATED —He prayed much and urgently.
וַיֵּעָתֶר לו WAS ENTREATED OF HIM — He let himself be urged, conciliated and influenced by him. I say that wherever this root עתר occurs it has the meaning of heaping up and increasing. E. g., (Ezekiel 8:11) "And a thick (עתר) cloud of incense" which means an abundance of ascending smoke; (Ezekiel 35:13) "You have multiplied (העתרתם) your words against me"; (Proverbs 27:6) "The kisses of an enemy are importunate (נעתרות)"—they

appear to be too many and therefore they are burdensome. old French encresser; English to increase.
לנכח אשתו FACING HIS WIFE — He stood in one corner and prayed whilst she stood in the other corner and prayed (Genesis Rabbah 63:5).
וי עתר לו [AND THE LORD] WAS ENTREATED OF HIM — of him and not of her, because there is no comparison between the prayer of a righteous person who is the son of a righteous person and the prayer of a righteous person the child of a wicked-person — therefore God allowed himself to be entreated of him and not of her (Yevamot 64a).

Verse 22

ויתרצצו AND [THE CHILDREN] STRUGGLED — You must admit that this verse calls for a Midrashic interpretation since it leaves unexplained what this struggling was about and it states that she exclaimed "If it be so, wherefore did I desire this" (i.e. she asked whether this was the normal course of child-bearing, feeling that something extraordinary was happening). Our Rabbis explain that the word ויתרוצצו has the meaning of running, moving quickly: whenever she passed by the doors of the Torah (i. e. the Schools of Shem and Eber) Jacob moved convulsively in his efforts to come to birth, but whenever she passed by the gate of a pagan temple Esau moved convulsively in his efforts to come to birth (Genesis Rabbah 63:6). Another explanation is: they struggled with one another and quarrelled as to how they should divide the two worlds as their inheritance (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 111:2).
ותאמר אם כן means AND SHE SAID, "IF the pain of pregnancy be so great, למה זה אנכי WHY IS IT that I longed and prayed to become pregnant?" (Genesis Rabbah 63:6).
ותלך לדרש AND SHE WENT TO ENQUIRE at the school of Shem (Genesis Rabbah 63:6).
לדרש את ה', TO ENQUIRE OF THE LORD, that He might tell her what would happen to her at the end.

Verse 23

ויאמר ה' לה AND THE ETERNAL SAID UNTO HER through a messenger: it was told to Shem by holy inspiration and he told it to her (Genesis Rabbah 63:7).
שני גויים בבטנך TWO NATIONS ARE IN THY WOMB —The word is written גיים (exalted, noble persons), an allusion to Antoninus and Rabbi (Rabbi Judah the Prince) from whose table neither radish nor lettuce was absent neither in summer nor in winter (Avodah Zarah 11a)
ושני לאמים AND TWO RACES — The word לאם always denotes a people that has all the characteristics of a kingdom (Avodah Zarah 2b)
ממעיך יפרדו SHALL BE PARTED FROM THY BOWELS —as soon as they leave thy body they will take each a different course — one to his wicked ways, the other to his plain life (Genesis 5:27)
מלאם יאמץ SHALL BE STRONGER THAN THE OTHER RACE —They will never be equally great at the same time: when one rises the other will fall. Thus it says, (Ezekiel 26:2) "[Because Tyre (colonised by Esau) says about Jerusalem] I shall be filled with her that is laid waste" — Tyre became full (powerful) only through the ruin of Jerusalem (Megillah 6a).

Verse 24

וימלאו ימיה AND WHEN HER DAYS TO BEAR WERE FULL — But in the case of Tamar it is written, (37:27) "And it came to pass at the time of her travail", for her days were not fulfilled as she gave birth to them (her children) at the end of seven months.

והנה תומם BEHOLD, THERE WERE TWINS — The word for twins is written defective (without א and י) whilst in the case of Tamar it is written תאומים (with א and י); because in the latter case both children proved righteous whilst here one was righteous and the other wicked (Genesis Rabbah 63:8).

Verse 25

אדמוני RED — a sign that he would always be shedding blood (Genesis Rabbah 63:8).
כלו כאדרת שער means full of hair like a woolen garment that is full of hair old French floche; English flock).
ויקרא שמו עשו AND THEY CALLED HIS NAME ESAU — every one called him thus because he was made (עשה means to make) and fully developed with hair as a lad several years old.

Verse 26

ואחרי כן יצא אחיו וגו AND AFTERWARDS HIS BROTHER CAME OUT, ETC. — I have heard a homiletical midrash that expounds it according to its simple meaning: It was with justice that he was grabbing him to hold him back. Jacob was conceived from the first drop and Esau from the second. Go and learn from a tube with a narrow opening - put in it two stones, one after the other. The one that goes in first will come out last, and the one that goes in last will come out first. It comes out that Esau, who was conceived last, came out first, and Jacob, who was conceived first, came out last. And [so] Jacob came to hold him back, so that the first for birth would be the same as the first for conception; and he would open [his mother's] womb and take the first-born status with justice (see Genesis Rabbah 63:8).
בעקב עשו ESAU'S HEEL — a sign that this one (Esau) will hardly have time to complete his period of domination before the other would rise and take it (his power) from him
ויקרא שמו יעקב AND HE CALLED HIS NAME JACOB — The Holy One, blessed be He, thus named him (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 4). [Some versions add: He said to them (to those who gave Esau that name cf. Genesis 5:25): You have given your first-born a name, I, too, will give my son, my firstborn, (cf. Exodus 4:23) a name. That is what is written, "And He called his name, Jacob" (Genesis 26:26). Another explanation is: his father called him Jacob because he was grasping Esau's heel
בן ששים שנה THREESCORE YEARS OLD — Ten years passed from the time when he married her until she became thirteen years old and capable of child-bearing, and a further ten years he hopefully waited as his father did in regard to Sarah. When even then she did not become with child he realised that she was barren and he prayed for her. But He did not wish to take a maidservant as a second wife because he had been sanctified on Mount Moriah to be a burnt-offering without blemish.

Verse 27

ויגדלו … ויהי עשו AND THEY GREW … AND ESAU WAS — So long as they were young they could not be distinguished by what they did and no one paid much attention to their characters, but when they reached the age of thirteen, one went his way to the houses of learning and the other went his way to the idolatrous temples (Genesis Rabbah 63:10).
יודע ציד A CUNNING HUNTER literally, understanding hunting — understanding how to entrap and deceive his father with his mouth. He would ask him, "Father how should salt and straw be tithed"? (Genesis Rabbah 63:10) (although he knew full well that these are not subject to

the law of tithe). Consequently his father believed him to be very punctilious in observing the divine ordinances.
איש שדה A MAN OF THE FIELD — Explain it literally (i.e., not in a Midrashic manner): a man without regular occupation, hunting beasts and birds with his bow.
תם A PLAIN MAN — not expert in all these things: as his heart was his mouth (his thoughts and his words tallied). One who is not ingenious in deceiving people is called תם plain, simple.
יושב אהלים DWELLING IN TENTS — the tent of Shem and the tent of Eber (Genesis Rabbah 63:10).

Verse 28

בפיו [THERE WAS HUNTING] IN HIS MOUTH — Understand this as the Targum renders it: in Isaac's mouth (i. e. Isaac ate the venison he brought home). But its Midrashic explanation is: there was hunting in Esau's mouth, meaning that he used to entrap and deceive him by his words (Genesis Rabbah 63:10).

Verse 29

ויזד means boiling, as the Targum renders it.
והוא עיף AND HE WAS FAINT through murdering people, just as you mention faintness in connection with murder, (Jeremiah 4:31) ''For my soul fainteth before the murderers" (Genesis Rabbah 63:12).

Verse 30

הלעיטני LET ME SWALLOW — I will open my mouth and you pour a lot in. The word is really used of feeding animals as we find the word in the Mishna, (Shabbat 155b) "One may not fatten up a camel on the Sabbath but one may put food (מלעיטין) into its mouth. "
מן האדם האדם הזה FROM THIS RED, EVEN THIS RED THING —red lentils. On that day Abraham had died in order that he might not see his grandson Esau falling into degenerate ways. This would not have been the "good old age" (cf. 25:8) which God had promised him; therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, cut his life short by five years — for Isaac lived 180 years and he only one hundred and seventy five. Jacob was boiling lentils to provide the customary first meal for the immediate mourners. Why should lentils be the mourner's food? Because they are round like a wheel and mourning (sorrow) is a wheel that revolves in the world (it touches everyone sooner or later as a revolving wheel touches every spot in turn) (Bava Batra 16b). And a further reason is: just as lentils have no mouth — (the word mouth פה is used in Hebrew of a serrated edge) — so, too, mourners have no mouth (appear dumb), for speech (greeting others) is forbidden to them. For this reason, also, it is customary to give eggs to a mourner as his first meal, because they are round and have no mouth (serrated edge) and similarly a mourner has no mouth (may not greet others), just as we say in Moed Katan 21b. "A mourner during the first three days (of the week of mourning) may not respond to the greeting of any person — it follows, of course, that he may not be the first to greet anyone — and from the third to the seventh day he may respond to a greeting but may not be the first to offer a greeting etc." From "And a further reason" is to be found in an old Rashi text.

Verse 31

מכרה כיום SELL ME THIS DAY (literally, like the day) — Explain it as the Targum renders it "as this day": just as this day is certain, so make me a sure sale.

בכרתך THY BIRTHRIGHT — Because the sacrificial service was then carried out by the first-born sons, Jacob said, "This wicked man is unworthy to sacrifice to the Holy One, blessed be He" (Genesis Rabbah 63:13).

Verse 32

הנה אנכי הולך למות BEHOLD I AM IN PERIL TO DIE — The birthright is something unstable, for not always will the sacrificial duties be performed by the first-born, for the tribe of Levi will assume this. Further Esau said: What is the nature of this Service? Jacob replied, "Many prohibitions and punishments and many acts involving even the punishment of death are associated with it — just as we read in the Mishna, (Sanhedrin 22b): The following priests are liable to death: those who carry out their duties after having drunk too much wine and those who officiate long-haired. He said: If I am going to die through it, why should I desire it.

Verse 33

Verse 34

ויבז עשו THUS ESAU DESPISED—Scripture testifies to his wickedness: that he despised the Service of the Omnipresent!

Chapter 26

Verse 1

Verse 2

אל תרד מצרימה GO NOT DOWN INTO EGYPT — Because he thought of going down to Egypt as his father had gone down in time of famine. He said to him, "Do not go down to Egypt for you are a burnt-offering without blemish and residence outside the Holy Land is not befitting you" (Genesis Rabbah 64:3).

Verse 3

האל is the same as האלה THESE.

Verse 4

והתברכו בזרעך AND IN THY SEED SHALL BLESS THEMSELVES — A man will say to his son, "May your seed be as the seed of Isaac". Such is the meaning of this phrase wherever it occurs in the entire Scriptures. The following passage is that from which this meaning may be derived for all such passages: (48:20) "By thee shall all Israel bless their children saying, "May God make thee [as Ephraim and Manasseh]". So, too, in the case of a curse do we find a similar idea: (Numbers 5:27) "And the woman shall become a curse", meaning that one who curses his enemy will say "May you be like such and such a woman". Similar, also, is (Isaiah 65:15) "And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto mine elect", meaning that one who takes an oath will say "May I be like such-and-such a person if I have really done so-and-so".

Verse 5

שמע אברהם בקלי ABRAHAM HEARKENED TO MY VOICE when I put him to the test.
וישמר משמרתי AND KEPT MY CHARGE — This refers to precautionary measures which are intended to make us avoid the infringement of Biblical prohibitions: such are the Rabbinical inhibition of marriage between relatives in the second degree and the Rabbinical regulations regarding not doing certain acts on the Sabbath (cf. Yevamot 21a).
מצותי MY COMMANDMENTS — those matters which, had they not been written in the Torah, we would nevertheless hold that they are fitting matters to be the subject of a commandment, such as robbery and murder (cf. Yoma 67b).
חקותי MY ORDINANCES — matters which our evil inclination and the heathen nations argue against the necessity of prohibiting, such as the eating of swine's flesh and the wearing of garments made of a mixture of wool and linen — things for which there are no apparent reasons but which are the King's decrees and enactments imposed on His subjects (Yoma 67b).
ותורתי AND MY LAWS — The plural serves to include with the written Law also the Oral Law which prescribes commands that are an ancient institution given by God to Moses from Sinai (cf. Genesis Rabbah 64:4).

Verse 6

Verse 7

לאשתו means CONCERNING HIS WIFE, just as (20:13) "Say about me (לי), He is my brother".

Verse 8

וישקף אבימלך וגומר AND AVIMELEKH OBSERVED, ET CETERA — He saw him having sexual relations (Genesis Rabbah 64:5).

Verse 9

Verse 10

אחד העם ONE OF THE PEOPLE — the one singled out from the people — viz., the king (cf. Targum).
והבאת עלינו אשם AND YOU WOULD HAVE BROUGHT GUILT UPON US — If he had lain with her already, YOU WOULD HAVE BROUGHT GUILT UPON US.

Verse 11

Verse 12

בארץ ההוא IN THAT LAND although it (Gerar) had not the sacred importance of Erez Yisroel proper — i. e., as the territory of the seven nations, and is therefore not as fertile as the Holy Land (cf. Ketubot 112a).
בשנה ההיא IN THAT YEAR although it was not a normal year, being a year of famine.

בארץ ההיה בשנה ההיא In that land and in that year. — Why is there mention of the two — that land and that year? To tell you that that soil was hard and that year was a hard one (Genesis Rabbah 64:6).
מאה שערים AN HUNDREDFOLD — for they had estimated how much it should have yielded and it yielded one hundred for every measure which they had estimated. Our Rabbis said that the estimate was made for the purpose of the tithe (Genesis Rabbah 64:6).

Verse 13

כי גדל מאד UNTIL HE BECAME VERY GREAT — so that people used to say, "Rather the dung of Isaac's mules than all Abimelech's gold and silver''(Genesis Rabbah 64:7).

Verse 14

וְעֲבֻדָּה רבה means a great many things to do (i. e. great undertakings) O. F. ouvraine. The word עֲבוֹדָה denotes one thing to be done whereas עֲבֻדָּה denotes many things to be done (a collective noun)

Verse 15

סתמום פלשתים THE PHILISTINES STOPPED THEM, saying, "They may become a source of danger to us because of marauding troops that may invade us" (i.e.,they may invade our country to obtain possession of the wells, or if they invade us for any other reason they will be able to find a supply of water). (Tosafot Sotah 10.) The rendering of the Targum טמונין means "stopping up" and we find it in the language of the Talmud (Pesachim 42a) "Chokes up (מטמטם) the heart".

Verse 16

Verse 17

בנחל גרר IN THE VALLEY OF GERAR — far away from the city.

Verse 18

וישב ויחפר AND ISAAC DIGGED AGAIN — those wells which they had dug in the days of his father Abraham and which the Philistines had stopped up before Isaac left Gerar he once again dug.

Verse 19

Verse 20

עשק means DISPUTE.
כי התעשקו עמו means THEY ENGAGED WITH HIM about it in strife and DISPUTE.

Verse 21

שטנה old French nuisement; English hindrance.

Verse 22

ופרינו בארץ WE SHALL BE FRUITFUL IN THE LAND — as the Targum translates it וניפוש and we shall increase in the land).

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

ואחזת מרעהו —as the Targum renders it: וסיעת מרחמוחי which means a company formed from his friends, the מ meaning from סיעת מחאוהביו. There are some who explain that in מרעהו the מ is part of the noun מרע — just like (Judges 14:11) "Thirty companions (מרעים)" in the narrative of Samson — in order that the word ואחזת should be taken to be the construct state to מרעהו (the company of his friends). But it would not be a polite thing to speak thus of a king — the company of his friends — for if this were the meaning it would imply that he (Abimelech) took with him the whole company of his friends and that he had no more than one group of friends. For this reason it should be interpreted in the first way (that אחזת is not construct). And you need not be surprised at the ת of אחזת although the word is not in the construct state, for we have similar cases in Scripture: (Psalms 60:13) "help (עזרת) against the adversary", and (Isaiah 51:21) "Drunken, (שכרת) but not with wine".
אחזת signifies a collection and band, and a band is so called because the people who constitute it are held נאחזין together.

Verse 27

Verse 28

ראו ראינו WE SAW PLAINLY (literally, seeing we have seen) — We saw it in the case of your father and we see it in the case of yourself (Genesis Rabbah 64:10).
תהי נא אלה בינותינו וגו׳ means LET THE OATH that has existed BETWEEN US since the days of your father CONTINUE NOW BETWEEN US AND YOU.

Verse 29

לא נגענוך WE HAVE NOT TOUCHED THEE when we said to you "Go from us".
אתה THOU — thou, also, do with us in a like manner.

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

שבעה [AND HE CALLED IT] SHIBAH (swearing), in allusion to the Covenant (cf. v.31; “And they swear” etc.).

Verse 34

בן ארבעים שנה [AND ESAU WAS] FORTY YEARS OLD —Esau is compared to a boar, as it is said, (Psalms 80:14) “The boar from the wood doth ravage it”. The boar when it lies down stretches forth its cloven hoof as much as to say, “See, I am a clean animal” (whilst really cloven hoofs are a feature of clean animals only in conjunction with another that is lacking in the swine). In the same way these dukes of Esau rob and extort and pretend to be honorable (Genesis Rabbah 65:1). For the whole forty years Esau enticed women from their husbands and ill-treated them; when he reached the age of forty he said, “My father took a wife when he was forty and I shall do the same” (Gen. R. 65).

Verse 35

מרת רוח [AND THEY WERE] A VEXATION OF SPIRIT — the expression means opposing the spirit of a person. The first word is of the same root as (Deuteronomy 9:24), “Ye have been rebellious (ממרים)”: all their actions tended to be a grief
ליצחק ולרבקה TO ISAAC AND REBEKAH, because they worshipped idols (Genesis Rabbah 65:4).

Chapter 27

Verse 1

ותכהין HIS EYES WERE DIM through the smoke raised by these women in offering incense to idols (Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 8). Another explanation is: When Isaac was bound upon the altar and his father was about to slay him, at that very moment the heavens opened, the ministering angels saw it and wept, and their tears flowed and fell upon Isaac’s eyes which thus became dim (Genesis Rabbah 65:10). Another explanation is: They became dim just in order that Jacob might receive the blessings (Genesis Rabbah 65:8).

Verse 2

לא ידעתי יום מותי I KNOW NOT THE DAY OF MY DEATH — R. Joshua the son of Korcha said: When a person approaches the age at which his parents died he may well be anxious five years before and five years after. Isaac was then one hundred and twenty three years old and he said, “Perhaps I shall only reach the age of my mother who died at the age of 127 and I am now within five years of her age: therefore, I know not the day of my death — I may only reach the age of my mother or it may be the age of my father” (Genesis Rabbah 65:12).

Verse 3

שא נא — The word שא means sharpen, similar to what שא read in the Mishna (Beitzah 28a) “One may not sharpen the knife in the usual manner but one

may sharpen it by passing it (משיאין) over another". Isaac said to Esau, "Sharpen your knife and slaughter an animal according to the regulations so that you may not give me to eat נבלה" (i.e. the flesh of animal that is not killed according to the ritual rules) (Genesis Rabbah 65:13).
תליך means thy sword which is usually hung (at the side).
צודה לי AND HUNT FOR ME [SOME VENISON] of animals that are ownerless, but not of such as are acquired by theft (literally, by robbery).

Verse 4

Verse 5

לצוד ציד להביא TO HUNT FOR VENISON IN ORDER TO BRING IT —What is the force of to bring it? It means that he intended that if he would find no venison (flesh of a wild, ownerless animal) he would bring home of the flesh of an animal acquired by theft (Genesis Rabbah 65:13).

Verse 6

Verse 7

לפני ה' BEFORE THE LORD — By his permission: that He should approve of what I do.

Verse 8

Verse 9

וקח לי AND TAKE FOR ME — (The words may mean "Take that which belongs to me") — these are mine and not the proceeds of theft. Isaac had made provision in her marriage contract that she should receive daily two kids of the goats (Genesis Rabbah 65:14).
שני גדיי עזים TWO KIDS OF THE GOATS — Did then two kids of the goats form a meal for Isaac? But the explanation is: it being Passover he offered one as his Paschal sacrifice and of the other he prepared the savoury food. So is it stated in Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 32).
כאשר אהב SUCH AS HE LOVETH (Genesis 27:5) — For the taste of a kid is similar to the taste of a deer.

Verse 10

Verse 11

איש שער means A HAIRY MAN.

Verse 12

ימשני HE WILL FEEL ME — The word is of the same root as the verb in (Deuteronomy 28:29) "One groping (מחשש) at noon-day".

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

החמדות THE COSTLY GARMENTS — the clean ones, as the Targum has it, דכיתא (clean); (cf. Rashbam). Another explanation: They are called חמדות literally, coveted ones, because he had coveted them from Nimrod (who also was a hunter; cf. Genesis 10:9) (Genesis Rabbah 65:16)
אשר אתה בבית WHICH WERE WITH HER IN THE HOUSE — But he had several wives and yet he stored them with his mother! But the reason for this was that he was acquainted with their practices and was suspicious of them (Genesis 10:9) (he feared that they might steal his clothes) (Genesis Rabbah 65:16).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

אנכי עשו בכרך I AM ESAU THY FIRST-BORN — I am he that brings food to you, and Esau is your first-born.
עשיתי I HAVE DONE many things at different times כאשר דברת אלי ACCORDING AS THOU SPAKEST UNTO ME
שבה SIT — The word means to sit at the table and therefore it is translated in the Targum by אסתחר (from סחר to "go round" corresponding to the Hebrew סבב from which the term מֵסֵב to recline at, to sit round the table at a meal is derived).

Verse 20

Verse 21

גשה נא ואמשך STEP NEAR, I PRAY THEE, THAT I MAY FEEL THEE — Isaac said to himself, "It is not Esau's way to mention the name of God so readily, and this one says, "Because the Lord thy God caused it thus to happen to me! קול יעקב (Genesis Rabbah 65:19).

Verse 22

THE VOICE OF JACOB, because he speaks in an entreating strain —"Arise I pray thee." Esau, however, spoke in a harsh strain (v. 31) "Let my father arise" (Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 11).

Verse 23

Verse 24

ויאמר אני AND HE SAID I AM — He did not say, "I am Esau", but "It is I".

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

וירח וגו' AND HE SMELLED etc.— Surely there is no more offensive smell than that of washed goat-skins! But Scripture implicitly tells us that the perfume of the Garden of Eden entered the room with him (Genesis Rabbah 65:22).
כריח שדה אשר ברכו AS THE ODOUR OF A FIELD WHICH THE ETERNAL HATH BLESSED — to which God has given a pleasant perfume: it refers to a field of apple-trees. So have our Rabbis, of blessed memory, explained it (Taanit 29b).

Verse 28

ויתן לך THEREFORE GOD GIVE THEE — May he give thee and give thee repeatedly (Genesis Rabbah 66:3). However, according to its real meaning it must be connected with the preceding statement — viz., with the words, "See, the smell of my son, which the Holy One, blessed be He, has given him is like the smell of the field etc." And may He also give thee of the dew of heaven
מטל השמים OF THE DEW OF HEAVEN — Take it in the ordinary sense of the words; but there are Midrashic explanations giving many different meanings
האלהים GOD [GIVE THEE]—What denotes the use here of the Divine Name אלהים which signifies God in His attribute of Justice? May He act in justice! If you are worthy of it may He give it to you, and if not, let Him not give it to you. But to Esau he said, (Genesis 27:39) "The fat places of the earth shall be thy dwelling" —whether you be righteous or wicked He will give you this. From him (Isaac) did Solomon learn when he built the Temple how to compose his prayer (having in mind a similar idea): An Israelite who is a man of faith and acknowledges that God's judgment is just will not reproach You;—therefore (1 Kings 8:39) "Render unto every man (Israelite; 1 Kings 8:38) according to his ways whose heart thou knowest". A stranger, however, is lacking in faith; therefore Solomon said, (1 Kings 8:43) "Hear thou in heaven … and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for — whether he be worthy or unworthy grant him his request in order that he may not reproach You. This explanation of האלהים is found in an old and correct text of Rashi.

Verse 29

בני אמך THY MOTHER'S SONS — Jacob, however, said to Judah (49:8) "Thy father's sons (shall bow down to thee]", because he had sons by several wives, but here, because he (Isaac) had but one wife he said "thy mother's sons" (Genesis Rabbah 66:4).
ארריך ארור ומברכיך ברוך THEY THAT CURSE THEE SHALL BE CURSED AND THEY THAT BLESS THEE SHALL BE BLESSED — But in the case of Balaam Scripture

says (Numbers 24:9) "Blessed be everyone that blesseth thee and cursed be every one that curseth thee". The explanation is: the righteous have sufferings first and happiness afterwards, so that in point of time those who curse and afflict them (cause them suffering) come before those who bless them (cause them happiness) — therefore Isaac, a righteous man, invokes a curse upon those who themselves curse before he invokes a blessing upon those who bless. The wicked however have happiness first and suffering afterwards; therefore Balaam, a wicked man, invokes the blessing before the curse (Genesis Rabbah 66:4).

Verse 30

יצא יצא [JACOB] WAS YET SCARCE GONE OUT — this means, as one went out the other came in (Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 11).

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

ויחרד [AND ISAAC] TREMBLED — Explain it as the Targum renders it ותוה, which means he was perplexed. The Midrashic explanation (Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 11) is that he saw Gehinnom opening beneath him (Esau).
מי אפוא WHO THEN IS HE — The word אפוא is an independent particle having no etymological connection with any other Hebrew word and is used with many different shades of meaning Another explanation of אפוא is that it is the same as איה פה where here, — so that מי אפוא means "Who is he and where is he here that hath hunted venison"?)
ואכל מכל AND I HAVE EATEN OF ALL — all tastes that I desired to find in it I indeed found therein (Genesis Rabbah 67:2).
גם ברוך יהיה YEA, AND HE SHALL BE BLESSED — In order that you may not say "If Jacob had not deceived his father he would never have received the blessing", he, therefore, confirmed it, blessing him now of his own free will (Genesis Rabbah 67:2).

Verse 34

Verse 35

במרמה WITH SUBTLETY — with cleverness (cf. Onkelos).

Verse 36

הכי קרא שמו IS IT BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN CALLED [JACOB]—This is a question, like (29:15) "Is it because (הכי) thou art my brother?" Perhaps that is why they have given him the name Jacob — in reference to what was to happen in the future — that he would some time or other supplant me (יעקבני)? (Tanchuma). Why did Isaac tremble? He thought: Perhaps I have sinned in blessing the younger before the elder, thus changing the order of relationship between them. But when Esau began to cry out, "for he hath supplanted me these two times", his father asked him, "What did he do to you?" He replied, "He took away my birth-right". Isaac thereupon said, "It was on account of this that I was grieved and trembled: perhaps

I had overstepped the line of strict justice. Now, however, I have really blessed the first-born — 'And he shall indeed be blessed'".
ויעקבני THAT HE HATH SUPPLANTED ME — Explain it as the Targum renders it, וחכמני, which means "and he lay in wait for me." The word (Deuteronomy 19:11) וארב "and he lies in wait" is rendered by the Targum וכמי. There are some who read in the Targum not וכמני but וחכמני which means "he showed himself clever against me" (outwitted me).
אצלת HAST THOU NOT RESERVED — the word means "separating", "setting aside", like (Numbers 11:25) "And he separated.

Verse 37

הן גביר AND BEHOLD I HAVE MADE HIM THY MASTER — This blessing is the seventh in the series of blessings which Isaac gave to Jacob (cf. w. 28. 29) and yet he (Isaac) singles it out as though it were the chief blessing? But the explanation is, he said to him (Esau): "What benefit will a blessing be to you? If you acquire property, it will belong to him, for "Behold, I have made him thy master", and whatever a servant acquires becomes the property of his master (Genesis Rabbah 67:5).
ולכה אפוא מה אעשה בני AND WHAT SHALL I DO NOW UNTO THEE [MY SON?] — Where here (איפה) shall I look for something that I can do for you?

Verse 38

הברכה אחת HAST THOU BUT ONE BLESSING? The ה in הברכה is the interrogative prefix, as in (Num. XIII. 19, 20) "whether in camps (הבמחנים)", "whether it is fat (השמנה)", and (2 Sam. III. 33) "Should Abner die (הכמות) as a churl dieth"?

Verse 39

משמני הארץ וגו THE FATNESS OF THE EARTH etc. — This refers to the Greek portions of Italy (Graeca Magna) (Genesis Rabbah 67:6).

Verse 40

ועל חרבך—The phrase is equivalent to בחרבך BY THY SWORD. The word על is sometimes used instead of the prefix ב, as (Ezekiel 33:26) "Ye stand by your sword (על חרבכם)", which is the same as בחרבכם; (Exodus 6:26) "by their hosts (על צבאותם), which is the same as בצבאותם.
והיה כאשר תריד AND IT SHALL CAME TO PASS THAT WHEN THOU ROVEST ABOUT — The word תריד signifies grief, pain, as (Psalms 40:3) "I am distraught (אריד) in my complaint". It means: when Israel will transgress the Torah and you will have reason to feel aggrieved with regard to the Blessings, ופרקת עלו וגו THEN THOU SHALT PULL HIS YOKE FROM OFF THY NECK (Genesis Rabbah 67:7).

Verse 41

יקרבו ימי אבל אבי THE DAYS OF MOURNING FOR MY FATHER APPROACH — Explain it according to the evident meaning of the words — (I will wait to kill him until my father is dead), that I may not cause grief to my father. There are Midrashic explanations of various kinds.

Verse 42

ויגד לרבקה WERE TOLD TO REBEKAH — It was told her by the Holy Spirit what Esau was thinking in his heart (Genesis Rabbah 67:9).
מתנחם לך DOTH COMFORT HIMSELF CONCERNING THEE — He regrets the brotherly relationship existing between you, harbouring thoughts other than those

of brotherhood, to estrange himself from you and to kill you. The Midrashic explanation (Genesis Rabbah 67:9) is: In his eyes you are already regarded as dead and he has drunk for you (i. e. because he regards you as dead) the cup of consolation (which it was customary for near relatives of the deceased to drink). But according to the real meaning the word signifies "comforting" — he will comfort himself for the loss of the blessings by killing you.

Verse 43

Verse 44

אחדים means A FEW.

Verse 45

למה אשכל means WHY SHOULD I BE BEREAVED משניכם OF BOTH OF YOU? — The one who buries his children is termed שכול bereaved: so we find in the case of Jacob (43:14), "If I am to be bereaved (שכלתי) let me be bereaved". גם שניכם OF YOU BOTH — If he attacks you and you kill him his children will rise and kill you. The Holy Spirit poured itself forth upon her and she prophesied (had a presage) that they would both die on one day just as it is stated in the Chapter המקנה לאשתו (Sotah 13a).

Verse 46

קצתי בחיי means I AM DISGUSTED WITH MY LIFE.

Verse 47

Verse 48

Chapter 28

Verse 1

Verse 2

פדנה is the same as לפדן to Padan;
ביתה בתואל is the same as לבית בתואל to the house of Bethuel. To every word requiring a ל prefixed you may attach a ה as a suffix (Yevamot 13b).

Verse 3

ואל שדי AND GOD ALMIGHTY —He who has a sufficiency of blessings שֶׁדַּי for those who are blessed by Him, יברך אתך MAY HE BLESS THEE.

Verse 4

את ברכת אברהם THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM, (i. e. the blessing which He gave to (Abraham) to whom He promised, (12:2) "and I will make of thee a great nation", and (26:4) "and all the nations shall bless themselves by thy seed": may these blessings have been said regarding you — may that great nation and that blessed seed issue from you.

Verse 5

אם יעקב ועשו MOTHER OF JACOB AND ESAU — I do not know what the addition of these words is intended to tell us.

Verse 6

Verse 7

וישמע יעקב AND THAT JACOB HEARKENED — This is to be connected with the proceeding statement, (v. 6) thus: And when Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and that he had sent him away to Padan-aram … and that Jacob had hearkened to his father and had gone to Padan-aram and that the daughters of Canaan were evil … then he also determined to take a wife from his own family and went to Ishmael.

Verse 8

Verse 9

אחות נביות THE SISTER OF NEBAIOTH — By a logical inference from what is stated that she was "the daughter of Ishmael" would I not know that she was the sister of Nebaioth? But the words are added to tell us that Ishmael died after he had betrothed her to Esau and before her marriage, and that her brother Nebaioth gave her away in marriage And we may learn, also, that Jacob was at that period sixty-three years old For Ishmael was seventy-four years old when Jacob was born — since Ishmael was fourteen years older than Isaac, and Isaac was sixty when they (Jacob and Esau) were born, making seventy-four and his (Ishmael's) years were one hundred and thirty seven — as it is said (25:17) "And these are the years of Ishmael etc." — consequently when Ishmael died Jacob was sixty-three years old. We learn from this that he (Jacob) concealed himself in Eber's School for fourteen years and only after that did he proceed to Haran. For before Joseph's birth he had stayed in Laban's house only fourteen years, as it is said (31:41) "I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters and six years for thy flock", and he received the sheep as wages only after Joseph was born, for it is said (30:25) "And it came to pass when Rachel had borne Joseph etc. [that Jacob wished to leave Laban and he agreed to remain with him on condition of receiving certain sheep as wages]. Now Joseph was thirty years old when he became ruler in Egypt, and from then until the time that Jacob came down to Egypt was nine years — seven of plenty and two of famine — and Jacob then said to Pharaoh (47:9), "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years". Go and calculate: the fourteen years he passed with Laban before Joseph's birth, and the thirty years of Joseph's life before he became ruler and the nine years from when he became ruler until the time that Jacob came to Egypt make fifty three years from the time he joined Laban until the time he came to Egypt But when he parted from his father he was sixty-three years old, as shown above, so that you have 116 years as his age when he came to Egypt, on the assumption that the fifty-three years

he spent with Laban etc. began immediately after he had left his father. But he (Jacob) himself said to Pharaoh, "[I am] one hundred and thirty years". So you see that fourteen years are missing on this assumption. Thus you learn that after he had received the blessings he concealed himself in Eber' School for fourteen years (Megillah 17a). But he received no punishment for them (these fourteen years) on account of the merit of having studied the Torah in Eber's School during that period For Joseph was separated from his father only twenty-two years — that is, from the age of seventeen to that of thirty-nine - corresponding to the twenty-two years during which Jacob was separated from his father and could not perform the duty of honouring him (by actively attending to his needs), viz, the twenty years he spent in Laban's house and the two years he passed in travelling home - for it is written (33:17) with regard to his journey homewards, "And Jacob built him a house and made booths for his cattle", and our Rabbis, of blessed memory, inferred (Megillah 17a) from this verse that during his travels he passed eighteen months at Succoth, since a house means a dwelling for the rainy season, and "booths" means for the summer time. And this statement that the study of the Torah protects one from punishment fits in with the calculation which we made above, based upon the Sacred Text, regarding the period from when he left his father until the time when he went down to Egypt at the age of 130 years, where we found a surplus of 14 years, so that he must have been absent from his father for 36 years. But we may regard it as certain that when on his journey to Laban he concealed himself in Eber's house it was for the purpose of studying the Torah with him and that because of the merit of studying the Torah he received no punishment for them (those fourteen years) so that Joseph was separated from him only twenty-two years "measure for measure"(Megillah 17a). Thus far (beginning at "But he received no punishment") is found in an old Rashi text.
עַל נָשָׁיו BESIDES HIS FORMER WIVES — He added wickedness to wickedness for he did not divorce his first wives (Genesis Rabbah 67:13).

Verse 10

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב AND JACOB WENT OUT— Owing to the fact that it was because the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac, his father, that Esau went to Ishmael, Scripture broke off the narrative contained, in the section dealing with Jacob, and wrote (verse 6 till verse 9), "Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed [Jacob] etc., that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac and so he went to Ishmael" and when it finished this (the account of Esau's further marriage) it resumes the previous subject.
וַיֵּצֵא [AND JACOB] WENT OUT—It need have written simply "And Jacob went to Haran''; why then does it mention his departure from Beersheba? But it intends to tell us that the departure of a righteous person from his city makes an impression. As long as a righteous man is in his city he is its glory and splendour and beauty; when he leaves it, there depart also its glory, its splendour and its beauty. This, too, is the meaning of (Ruth 1:7) "And she went forth out of the place", stated in reference to Naomi and Ruth (Genesis Rabbah 68:6).
וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָנָה means he went out TO GO TO HARAN.

Verse 11

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם AND HE LIGHTED UPON THE PLACE — Scripture does not mention which place, but by writing בַּמָּקוֹם the place it refers to the place mentioned already in another passage, viz., Mount Moriah of which it is stated (Genesis 22:4) "And he saw the place (הַמָּקוֹם) afar off".
וַיִּפְגַּע AND HE LIGHTED — similar are (Joshua 16:7) "and it reached (וּפָגַע) unto Jericho", and (Joshua 19:11) "and reached (וּפָגַע) to Dabesheth". Our

Rabbis explained it in the sense of "praying", just as (Jeremiah 7:16) "Neither make intercession (תפגע) to me". Thus we may learn that Jacob originated the custom of Evening Prayer. Scripture purposely changed the usual word for "praying", not writing יתפלל, "And he prayed" (which would have been the more appropriate word, but ויפגע which means to hit upon a place unexpectedly), to teach you also that the ground shrunk before him (the journey was miraculously shortened) as it is explained in the Chapter גיד הנשה (Chullin 91b).
כי בא השמש BECAUSE THE SUN WAS SET — It should have written, "The sun set and he tarried there all night", but the words "he tarried there all night because the sun set", imply that the sun set unexpectedly — not at its proper time — just in order that he should tarry there over night).
וישם מראשתיו AND PUT THEM FOR A RESTING PLACE FOR HIS HEAD — He arranged them in the form of a drain-pipe around his head for he was afraid of wild beasts (Genesis Rabbah 68:11). They (the stones) began quarrelling with one another. One said, "Upon me let this righteous man rest his head", and another said "Upon me let him rest it". Whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, straightway made them into one stone! This explains what is written (Genesis 28:18), "And he took the stone that he had put under his head" (Chullin 91b).
וישכב במקום ההוא AND [HE] LAY DOWN IN THAT PLACE —The word ההוא, that, has a limitative force: in that place he lay down to sleep, but during the previous fourteen years when he sat under his teachers in the School of Eber he never slept at night for he was incessantly engaged in the study of the Torah (Genesis Rabbah 68:11).

Verse 12

עלים וירדים ASCENDING AND DESCENDING — It states first ascending and afterwards descending! Those angels who accompanied him in the land of Israel were not permitted to leave the Land: they ascended to Heaven and angels which were to minister outside the Land descended to accompany him (Genesis Rabbah 68:12).

Verse 13

נצב עליו STOOD ABOVE HIM to guard him (Genesis Rabbah 69:3).
ואלהי יצחק AND THE GOD OF ISAAC — Although we do not find in the Scriptures that God associates his Name with that of the righteous whilst they are yet alive by writing, "The God of so-and-so", — because it is said (Job 15:15) "Behold He putteth no trust even in His holy ones" — here, however, He associated his Name with that of Isaac because his eyes had become dim and he was confined to the house, so that he might be regarded as dead and as though the evil inclination had already passed away from him and he was unlikely to sin any more (Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 7).
שכב עליה THE LAND WHEREON THOU LIEST — The Holy One, blessed be He, rolled together the entire Land of Israel under him, thus intimating to him that it would be as easily conquered by his descendants (Chullin 91b) as a piece of land four cubits in length, which is the space covered by a person lying down (see Rashi, Chullin 91b, and the note of the ב"ח thereon).

Verse 14

ופרצת means AND THOU SHALT BECOME STRONG, like (Exodus 1:12) "the more they became strong".

Verse 15

אנכי עמך I AM WITH THEE — God promised him this because he was in terror of Esau and Laban.
עד אשר אם עשיתי UNTIL I HAVE DONE — The word אם is here used in the sense of כי (cf. Gittin 90a).
דברתי לך means I have spoken in thy interest and concerning thee: whatever I promised to Abraham regarding his seed it was in reference to you that I promised it and not in reference to Esau, for I did not say to him "Isaac shall be called thy seed" (which would have signified that all Isaac's descendants would be regarded, also, as Abraham's) but I said (21:12) ביצחק "In Isaac" and not all the issue of Isaac". In the same way wherever לי or לך or לו or להם are used after a verbal form of דבר, they are used in the sense of "concerning". This verse proves that this is so, since it cannot mean "I have spoken to thee" as He had never spoken to Jacob before this occasion.

Verse 16

ואנכי לא ידעתי AND I KNEW IT NOT — for had I known it I would not have slept in such a holy place as this.

Verse 17

כי אם בית אלהים THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE HOUSE OF GOD —R. Eleazar said in the name of R. José the son of Zimra: "This ladder stood in Beersheba and [the middle of]) its slope reached opposite the Temple" (Genesis Rabbah 69:7). For Beersheba is situated in the South of Judah, Jerusalem in the North of it on the boundary between Judah and Benjamin and Bethel in the North of Benjamin's territory, on the border between the land of Benjamin and that of the children of Joseph. It follows, therefore, that a ladder whose foot is in Beersheba and whose top is in Bethel has the middle of its slope reaching opposite Jerusalem. Now as regards what our Rabbis stated (Chullin 91b) that the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "This righteous man has came to the place where I dwell (i.e., the Temple at Jerusalem, whilst from here it is evident that he had come to Luz) and shall he depart without staying here over night?", and with regard to what they also said, (Pesachim 88a) "Jacob gave the name Bethel to Jerusalem", whereas this place which he called Bethel was Luz and not Jerusalem, whence did they learn to make this statement (which implies that Luz is identical with Jerusalem)? I say that Mount Moriah was forcibly removed from its locality and came hither (to Luz), and that this is what is meant by the "shrinking" of the ground that is mentioned in the Treatise (Chullin 91b) — that the site of the Temple came towards him (Jacob) as far as Bethel and this too is what is meant by ויפגע במקום, "he lighted upon the place" (i.e., he "met" the place, as two people meet who are moving towards each other; cf. Rashi on Genesis 5:11). Now, since Jacob's route must have been from Beersheba to Jerusalem and thence to Luz and Haran and consequently when he reached Luz he had passed Jerusalem, if you should ask, "When Jacob passed the Temple why did He not make him stop there?" — If it never entered his mind to pray at the spot where his fathers had prayed should Heaven force him to stop there to do so? Really he had reached as far as Haran as we say in the Chapter גיד הנשה (Chullin 91b), and Scripture itself proves this since it states, "And he went to Haran". When he arrived at Haran he said, "Is it possible that I have passed the place where my fathers prayed without myself praying there?" He decided to return and got as far as Bethel where the ground "shrank" for him. This Bethel is not the Bethel that is near Ai (cf. Genesis 12:8) but that which is near Jerusalem, and because he said of it, "It shall be the House of God", he called it Bethel. This, too, is Mount Moriah, where Abraham prayed, and it is also the field in which Isaac offered prayer as it is written,

"[Isaac went out] to meditate (i. e., to pray; cf. Genesis 24:63) in the field". Thus, too, do we read in the Treatise (Pesachim 88a) in a comment on the verse Micah 4:2: "[O come ye and let us go up] to the mountain of the Lord (i.e. the mountain upon which the Temple is built) and to the house of the God of Jacob". What particular reason is there for mentioning Jacob? But the text calls the Temple not as Abraham did who called it a mount, and not as Isaac did, who called it a field, but as Jacob did who called it Beth[el]—the House of God. (To here from "This Bethel" is to be found in a certain correct Rashi-text)
מה נורא HOW FEARFUL — In the Targum it is translated by "How דחילו is this place!" דחילו is a noun, like סוכלתנו which is the Targum of תבונה "understanding" (Deuteronomy 32:28), and [למלבש] וכסו which is the Targum of ובגד ללבש "and raiment to put on") (Genesis 28:20)
וזה שער השמים AND THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN — a place of prayer where their prayers would ascend to heaven (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 35). The Midrash states (Genesis Rabbah 69:7) that the Heavenly Temple is situated immediately opposite the Earthly Temple (so that the Temple at Jerusalem-Bethel may be styled "the gate" to the Heavenly Temple)

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

אם יהיה אלהים עמדי IF GOD WILL BE WITH ME — if He will keep for me these promises which He has made me that He would be with me, even as He said to me (v. 15), "Behold, I am with thee" (Genesis Rabbah 70:4),
ושמרני AND IF HE WILL KEEP ME — even as He said to me (v. 15) "And I will keep thee whithersoever thou goest", (Genesis Rabbah 70:4)
ונתן לי לחם לאכול AND IF HE WILL GIVE ME BREAD TO EAT — even as He said (v. 15) "For I will not forsake thee" (Genesis Rabbah 70:4), — for one who has to beg his bread is called "forsaken", as it is said (Psalms 37:25) "I have not seen the righteous forsaken and his seed begging bread".

Verse 21

ושבתי SO THAT I RETURN — even as He said (v. 15) "I will restore thee again into this land" (Genesis Rabbah 70:4),
בשלום IN PEACE, perfectly free (שלם) from sin, not having learnt evil from Laban's ways,
והיה ה' לי לאלהים AND IF THE LORD WILL BE MY GOD, in that His Name shall rest upon me from the beginning to the end: that no unworthy person shall be found in my descendants (Sifré, 31 ואתחנן) — just as it is said (v. 15), "I will do that which I spake concerning thee"; and this promise He made to Abraham, as it is said (17:7) "To be a God unto thee and unto thy seed after thee",

Verse 22

והאבן הזאת THEN THIS STONE — This is how you should explain the ו of והאבן: if He will do these things mentioned in Genesis 28:15 as He promised, then I, also, will do this:
והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה THEN THIS STONE WHICH I HAVE SET UP FOR A PILLAR etc. — Explain it as the Targum translates it: "I shall serve the Lord

upon it” This, indeed, he did on his return from Padan-aram, when God said to him, (Genesis 35:1) “Arise, go up to Bethel”. What is stated there? “And Jacob set up a pillar … and he poured out a drink-offering thereon” (Genesis 35:14).

Chapter 29

Verse 1

וישא יעקב רגליו THEN JACOB LIFTED UP HIS FEET —As soon as he received the good tidings that he was assured of God’s protection his heart lifted up his feet and he walked swiftly. Thus is it explained in (Genesis Rabbah 70:8).

Verse 2

ישקו העדרים THEY GAVE THE DROVES DRINK —the shepherds used to water the flocks: this verse uses an elliptical phrase (omitting the subject “the shepherds”).

Verse 3

ונאספו [AND THITHER WERE ALL THE DROVES] GATHERED — they regularly gathered there because the stone was a heavy one
וגללו AND THEY ROLLED THE STONE — it means and they used to roll. In the Targum it is therefore translated by ומגנדרין (a participle). The idea of frequentative action is expressed indifferently by the imperfect (future) or the perfect (past) because every action that occurs continually, has already happened and will again happen,
והשיבו AND RESTORED [THE STONE] — In the Targum it is translated by ומתיבין(a participle) — and they were always putting back.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

באה עם הצאן IS COMING WITH THE FLOCK — The accent in the word באה is on the א, and the Targum is אתיא (a participle), “she is coming”; but in (v. 9) “And Rachel came (באה)”, the accent is on the first syllable, on the ב, and the Targum is אתת, “she came”. The former expresses the meaning “she is doing something” (a participle), the latter expresses the meaning “she has done something’ (a past tense).

Verse 7

הן עוד היום גדול LO, IT IS YET HIGH DAY — Because he saw them lying down he thought that they wished to take the cattle home, and that they should not graze any longer. He, therefore, said to them, “Lo, it is yet high day” — meaning, if you are hired men you have not yet finished your day’s task, and if these are your own cattle, nevertheless — לא עת האסף המקנה ' וגו IT IS NOT YET TIME FOR THE CATTLET TO BE GATHERED TOGETHER TO TAKE THEM HOME (Genesis Rabbah 70:11).

Verse 8

לא נוכל WE CANNOT — give them water because the stone is a heavy one.
וגללו AND THEY ROLL AWAY — This word is rendered in the Targum by ויגנדרון "and they will roll away" (whilst in Genesis 5:3 it is rendered by an Aramaic participle) because the verb has here a future meaning.

Verse 9

Verse 10

ויגש יעקב ויגל JACOB STEPPED NEAR AND ROLLED [THE STONE]- as easily as one draws the stopper from the mouth of a bottle — thus showing you how strong he was. (Bereishit Rabbah 70:12)

Verse 11

ויבך AND HE WEPT- because he foresaw by the Holy Spirit that she would not be buried with him in the cave of Machpelah (Genesis Rabbah 70:12). Another explanation is: he wept because he came with empty hands. He thought: Eliezer, my grandfather's servant, had with him rings, bracelets and all good things, whilst I have nothing with me (Genesis Rabbah 70:12). This was because Eliphaz Esau's son pursued Jacob by his father's order to kill him, and overtook him. But because Eliphaz had been brought up on Isaac's lap, (cp. Deuteronomy Rabbah 2:13) he withheld his hand. He said to him (Jacob), "But what shall I do as regards my father's order?" Jacob replied, "Take all I have and you can say that I am dead for a poor man may be accounted as dead" (Nedarim 64b).

Verse 12

כי אחי אביה הוא HE WAS HER FATHER'S BROTHER — near kin to her father, as (Genesis 13:8) "for we are men, brothers (אחים)" (i. e. near kin). A Midrashic explanation is that he meant: if he (Laban) intends to practice deceit upon me then I am his brother (a match for him) in deception; if, however, he is an honest man then I, too, am the son of his sister, the pious Rebekah (Genesis Rabbah 70:13).
ותגד לאביה AND SHE TOLD HER FATHER, because her mother was dead and she had no one to tell except him (Bereishit Rabbah 70:13).

Verse 13

וירץ לקראתו HE RAN TOWARDS HIM — thinking that he was laden with money, for the servant of that household (Eliezer) had come there with ten camels fully laden (Bereishit Rabbah 70:13).
ויחבק AND EMBRACED HIM — When he saw that he had nothing with him, he thought, "Perhaps he has brought gold coins and they are hidden away in his bosom!"
וינשק לו HE KISSED HIM — he thought, "Perhaps he has brought pearls (or precious stones, in general) and they are in his mouth!" (Genesis Rabbah 70:13)
ויספר ללבן HE TOLD LABAN that he had come only because he was forced to do so by his brother, and that all his money had been taken from him.

Verse 14

אך עצמי ובשרי SURELY THOU ART MY BONE AND MY FLESH — Really, I have no reason to take you into my house, since you have brought nothing with you; but because of our relationship I will put up with you for "the space of a month". Thus, indeed, he did, but even this was not for nothing, for he tended Laban's sheep.

Verse 15

הכי אחי אתה This is a question: — IS IT BECAUSE THOU ART MY BROTHER THAT THOU SHOULDST SERVE ME FOR NOUGHT?
ועבדתני is the same in sense as ותעבדני THAT THOU SHOULDST SERVE ME. So, too, in the case of every verb in the past tense, if one adds as prefix a ו it may change the verb to the future.

Verse 16

Verse 17

רכות TENDER — She thought she would have to fall to the lot of Esau and she therefore wept continually, because everyone said, "Rebekah has two sons, Laban has two daughters — the elder daughter for the elder son, the younger daughter for the younger son" (Genesis Rabbah 70:16).
תאר FORM — this denotes the shape (outline) of the face, just as the verb formed from the same root in (Isaiah 44:13) "he marks it out (יתארהו) with a pencil" old French compas.
מראה OF BEAUTIFUL APPEARANCE — this denotes the beauty of her features (a good complexion).

Verse 18

אעבדך שבע שנים I WILL SERVE THEE SEVEN YEARS — These are the "few days" of which his mother had spoken to him (27:44)): "And thou shalt tarry with him a few days". You can see that this is so, for it is written (v. 20) "And they (the seven years) were in his eyes (i.e. according to his view) the few days" of which his mother had spoken (Genesis Rabbah 70:17).
ברחל בתך הקטנה (literally, for Rachel, thy daughter, the younger one) — What reason was there for mentioning all these detailed descriptions of Rachel? Because he (Jacob) knew that he (Laban) was a deceiver. He said to him, "I will serve thee for Rachel": and should you say that I mean any other Rachel out of the street, therefore I say "your daughter". Should you say, "I will change Leah's name and call her Rachel", I say "your younger one". In spite of this, however, all these precautions did not avail, for he did actually deceive him (Genesis Rabbah 70:17).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

מלאו ימי MY DAYS ARE FULFILLED — which my mother told me to remain with you. And another explanation is: MY DAYS ARE FULFILLED for I am now eighty-four years old and when shall I beget twelve tribes? That is what

he meant by adding “that I may go in unto her”; for surely even the commonest of people would not use such an expression. But he said this because his mind was intent upon having issue (to fulfil his mission of rearing children who would carry on the religious traditions of his fathers) (Genesis Rabbah 70:18).

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

ויהי בבקר והנה הוא לאה AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT IN THE MORNING, BEHOLD, IT WAS LEAH —But at night it was not Leah (i. e. he failed to recognise that it was Leah) because Jacob had given Rachel certain secret signs by which they could at all times recognise one another, and when Rachel saw that they were about to bring Leah to him for the marriage ceremony, she thought, “My sister may now be put to shame”, and she therefore readily transmitted these signs to her (Megillah 13b).

Verse 26

Verse 27

מלא שבע זאת FULFIL THE WEEK OF THIS ONE — The word is in the construct state for it is punctuated with Sheva, so that the meaning is “the seven days of this woman”, referring to the seven days of the marriage feast. Such is the statement in the Talmud Yerushalmi Moed Katan 1:7. It is impossible to say that it means an actual week, (i. e. a calendar week), so that it would mean “finish this week” in the sense “wait until this week be ended”) — for, if so, the ש should be punctuated with Patach (Rashi terms our Kametz a Patach) for the noun must be in the absolute state. Then, again, the word שָׁבֻעַ is masculine — as it is written (Deuteronomy 16:9) “Seven (שבעה) weeks shalt thou number unto thyself” (and here we should have had זֶה שָׁבֻעַ). Consequently the word שבוע can only mean “a period of seven days” old French septaine (cf. Rashi on Exodus 10:22).
ונתנה לך AND WE WILL GIVE THEE — The verb is plural 1st pers. like (נרדה) (Genesis 11:7) “let us go down”, ונבלה “and let us confuse and (Genesis 11:3) ונשרפה “and let us burn": so, also here, it is a form of וְנִתֵּן “and we will give”.
גם את זאת THIS ONE ALSO we shall give to you immediately after the seven days of the marriage-feast and you may serve for her after marriage with her.

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

עוד שבע שנים אחרות YET SEVEN OTHER YEARS — Scripture adds the apparently redundant word אחרות another seven years, for the purpose of comparing them to the preceding seven years. — Even as he had worked faithfully during the earlier period (not anticipating any deception on Laban's part), so he worked faithfully during the latter period, although he (Laban) had practised this deception on him (Genesis Rabbah 70:20).

Verse 31

Verse 32

ותקרא שמו ראובן AND SHE CALLED HIS NAME REUBEN — Our Rabbis explained it thus: she said, "See (ראו) the difference between (בין) my son and my father-in-law's son who himself sold the birthright to Jacob and yet wished to kill him afterwards. This (my son) did not sell it (his birthright) to Joseph (it must be remembered that Joseph being the founder of two tribes was regarded as the first-born of Jacob's sons since the eldest son took a double portion in the father's property), yet he did not raise any protest to him being regarded as the first-born and not only did he not raise a protest but he even wished to take him out of the pit and so rescue him from death (Berakhot 7b).

Verse 33

Verse 34

הפעם ילוה אישי THIS TIME WILL MY HUSBAND BECOME ATTACHED TO ME — Because the Matriarchs were prophetesses and knew that twelve tribes would issue from Jacob and that he would have four wives, she said, "From now he will have no fault to find with me, for I have assumed my full share in giving him children" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayetzei 9).
על כן THEREFORE — Wherever in the case of the names given to Jacob's sons the word "therefore" is used, that tribe had a numerous population (Genesis Rabbah 71:4), Levi forming an exception, because the Ark decimated them.
קרא שמו לוי [THEREFORE] WAS HIS NAME CALLED LEVI (literally, he called his name) — Of all of them (the sons) it is written "And she called", but of this one Scripture writes "he called!" There is a Midrashic statement in Deuteronomy Rabbah that the Holy One, blessed be He, sent Gabriel who brought him (Levi) into His presence. He called him by this name and gave him the twenty-four perquisites with which the priesthood was favoured, and because He gave him these perquisites as an accompaniment (לוהו) He called him Levi (accompanied).

Verse 35

הפעם אודה NOW WILL I PRAISE [THE LORD] — because I have assumed more than my share, from now on I should praise God (Genesis Rabbah 71:4).

Chapter 30

Verse 1

ותקנא רחל באחתה RACHEL ENVIED HER SISTER — She was envious of her because of her good deeds, thinking, "Unless she were more righteous than I am she would not have been privileged to bear children (Genesis Rabbah 71:6)."
הבה לי GIVE ME [CHILDREN] — Did, then, your father act so towards your mother? Did he not pray on her behalf (Genesis Rabbah 71:6).
מתה אנכי I AM A DEAD WOMAN — One may infer from this that he who is childless may be regarded as dead (Genesis Rabbah 71:6).

Verse 2

התחת means AM I IN HIS STEAD?
אשר מנע ממך WHO HATH WITHHELD FROM THEE —You say that I should do as my father did; but I am not circumstanced as my father was. My father had no children at all, I, however, have children. From you He has withheld children and not from me (Genesis Rabbah 71:7).

Verse 3

על ברכי UPON MY KNEES — as the Targum takes it: she will bear children and I will rear them.
ואבנה גם אנכי AND I ALSO MAY HAVE CHILDREN — What force has "also"? She said to him, "Your grandfather, Abraham, had children from Hagar and yet he girded up his loins (actively interceded) for Sarah and she afterwards was blessed with a child". He replied, "But my grandmother brought an associate wife unto her house". She retorted, "If that is what prevents me being blessed with children, הנה אמתי BEHOLD MY HANDMAID" etc.
ואבנה גם אנכי AND I ALSO MAY HAVE CHILDREN through her as Sarah was built up through her handmaid (Genesis Rabbah 71:7).

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

דנני אלהים GOD HATH PRONOUNCED JUDGMENT UPON ME — He judged me and found me guilty; he judged me again and found me guiltless (Genesis Rabbah 71:7).

Verse 7

Verse 8

נפתולי אלהים WRESTLINGS OF GOD — Menachem ben Seruk explains in his Machbereth (Dictionary) that the word נפתולי is of the same root as פתיל in (Numbers 19:15) "a covering (פתיל) closely bound upon it", so that the words here mean: By bonds from God have I been joined to my sister (made equal to her) to merit the privilege of having children. I, however, explain it in the same sense as (Deuteronomy 32:5) "perverse and crooked

(עקש ופתלתול)". I have been persistent and have made many importunities and wrestlings with God that I may become like my sister.
גם יכלתי AND I HAVE PREVAILED — He has yielded to my importunities. Onkelos translated it in the sense of prayer (תפלה), in this way: נפתולי אלהים נפתלתי means prayers that were pleasing to God I offered and I was accepted and was answered like my sister.
נפתלתי means my prayer was accepted. There are many Midrashic explanations in the manner of Notaricon (i.e. making the letters of the word the initial letters of phrases having reference to the matter in question) (Genesis Rabbah 71:8).

Verse 9

Verse 10

ותלד זלפה AND ZILPAH BARE — In the case of all Jacob's wives there is mention of their having been with child (i. e. Scripture states ותהר) except in the case of Zilpah. This was because she was the youngest of all and quite a child in age so that her being with child was not noticeable (Genesis Rabbah 71:9) Laban had given her to Leah in order to deceive Jacob — that he might not perceive that they were bringing Leah to him in marriage — for thus was the custom: to give the elder handmaid to the elder daughter, and the younger handmaid to the younger daughter.

Verse 11

בא גד FOR MY HAPPINESS! — Good luck has come, as (Shabbat 67b) "Be lucky, my luck (גד גדי) and tire not". Similar, also, is (Isaiah 45:11) "That prepare a table for fortune (גד)". The Midrashic explanation is that he was born with the sign of the covenant upon him. It would then be like (Daniel 4:11) "cut down (גדו) the tree". I do not know why it (בגד) is written as one word. Another comment on בגד is: why is it read as one word? It may be connected with the root בגד which denotes faithless as though Leah said to Jacob, "You proved faithless to me when you married my handmaid", like a man who is faithless (בגד) to the wife of his youth).

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

בימי קציר חטים IN THE DAYS OF WHEAT HARVEST — This is stated in praise of the tribes (שבטים a common term for Jacob's twelve sons, the ancestors of the Tribes of Israel): it was harvest-time, yet he (Reuben) did not put forth his hand upon private property (literally, that which is stolen) by bringing home wheat or barley, but he brought home only ownerless things (such as were free for all to take) about which no one is particular (Genesis Rabbah 72:2).
דודאים are violets: it is a plant. In Arabic it is called Jasmin.

Verse 15

Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband and that thou wouldst do this in addition — TO TAKE MY SON'S MANDRAKES ALSO? It should therefore be translated in the Targum by ולמיטב, the infinitive like the Hebrew infinitive ולקחת "and to take."
לכן ישכב עמך הלילה THEREFORE SHALL HE BE WITH THEE TONIGHT —He should have stayed this night with me but I cede it to you in return for your son's mandrakes. Because she thought lightly of companionship with so righteous a man she was not privileged to be buried together with him (Genesis Rabbah 72:3).

Verse 16

שכר שכרתיך FOR SURELY I HAVE HIRED THEE — I have given Rachel the hire she demanded.
בלילה הוא THAT NIGHT — With God's help Isaachar was born (Niddah 31a, and cf. Genesis Rabbah 99).

Verse 17

וישמע אלהים אל לאה AND GOD HEARKENED UNTO LEAH —for she eagerly desired and sought means to increase the number of the tribes (Genesis Rabbah 72:5).

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

זבד טוב A GOOD DOWRY — explain it as the Targum renders it: a good portion.
יזבלני WILL RESIDE WITH ME — It has the same meaning as (1 Kings 8:13) "a house for dwelling (זבול)". In old French herbergerie, a dwelling house. Leah meant: From now on his real home will be with me since I have as many children as all his other wives together.

Verse 21

דינה DINAH (Judgment) — Our Rabbis explained, that Leah set herself up as judge (דנה) against herself saying: "If this be a son, my sister Rachel cannot be even the equal of any of the handmaids". She, therefore, offered prayer regarding it, and its sex was changed (Berakhot 60a).

Verse 22

ויזכר אלהים את רחל AND GOD REMEMBERED RACHEL — He remembered it to her as a merit that she had transmitted the secret signs to her sister and that she was greatly troubled lest she should fall to Esau's lot if Jacob were to divorce her because she was childless. Indeed, this had entered Esau's mind when he heard that she was childless (Genesis Rabbah 73:4). The poet refers to this in his Composition (for the First Day of the New Year) "When the Ruddy One (Esau) perceived that she did not travail with child, he hoped to take her for himself and she became terrified".

Verse 23

אסף [GOD] HATH TAKEN AWAY [MY DISGRACE] — He has laid it up somewhere where it cannot be seen. Similar examples are (Isaiah 4:1) "Take thou away (אסוף) our reproach"; (Exodus 9:19) "and shall not have been taken away (יאסף) into the house "; (Joel 4:13) "withdraw (אספו) their shining"; (Isaiah 60:20) "neither shall thy moon withdraw itself (יאסף) — meaning shall not hide itself.
חרפתי DISGRACE — because I had become an object of reproach as I was barren for people said about me that I would fall to the lot of Esau, the wicked. A Midrashic explanation is (Genesis Rabbah 73:5): So long as a woman has no child she has no-one to blame for her faults; when, however, she has a child, she puts it on him. "Who broke this vessel?" "Your son!" "Who ate those figs?" "Your son!"

Verse 24

יסף ה' לי בן אחר THE ETERNAL WILL ADD TO ME ANOTHER SON — She knew prophetically that Jacob would rear only twelve tribes. She therefore prayed: "May it be God's will that the tribe which he is yet destined to rear may issue from me". For this reason she prayed only for one other son (Genesis Rabbah 72:6).

Verse 25

כאשר ילדה רחל את יוסף WHEN RACHEL HAD BORN JOSEPH — after the birth of him who was to become Esau's adversary (Genesis Rabbah 73:7) — as it is said (Obadiah 1:18) "And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame and the house of Esau for stubble". Fire (Jacob) that has no flame (Joseph) has no effect at a distance. Therefore, when Joseph was born Jacob put his trust in the Holy One, blessed be He, and wished to return home (Obadiah 1:18).

Verse 26

תנה את נשי וגו GIVE ME MY WIVES etc. — I have no wish to go away except with your permission.

Verse 27

נחשתי I HAVE DIVINED — He was a diviner. "I have discovered by my art of divination that through you a blessing has come to me. When you first came here I had no sons" — for it is said (29:6) "And, behold, Rachel his daughter is coming with the flock": is it possible if he had sons that he would have let his daughter go among the shepherds? — now, however, he had sons, as it is said (31:1) "And he heard the words of Laban's sons".

Verse 28

נקבה— Explain it as the Targum renders it: state plainly thy wage.

Verse 29

ואת אשר היה מקנך אתי AND WHAT THY CATTLE HATH BECOME WITH ME — You know the number of your few cattle that were entrusted to me at first — how small their number was.

Verse 30

לרגלי SINCE MY COMING — The word is the same as עם רגלי "with my coming" (lit, with my foot)— on account of my coming has the blessing come to you (Genesis Rabbah 73:8). Similar is (Exodus 11:8) "And all the people that

come with thee (ברגלך)", and (Judges 8:5) "and the people that are ברגלי" — ie. that are coming with me.
גם אנכי לביתי WHEN SHALL I PROVIDE FOR MINE OWN HOUSE ALSO? — לביתי means for the needs of my household. At present my sons alone provide for my needs, but I, also, ought to work together with them, to assist them. This is the force of the word גם also.

Verse 31

Verse 32

נקוד SPECKLED — marked with small specks like dots old French pointure; English points.
וטלוא AND SPOTTED — The word has the same meaning as טלאים "patches" — wide spots.
חום BROWN — dark, somewhat reddish, old French rouge. In the language of the Mishna (Bava Batra 5:6): "If he sells it as reddish-dark coloured (שחמתית) and it is found to be white"—a statement made in reference to grain.
והיה שכרי AND THEY SHALL BE MY HIRE — those which from now on will be born speckled and spotted among the goats and the brownish ones amongst the sheep shall belong to me. Those that are at present such set them apart and place them in charge of your sons, so that you may not be able to say to me about those that will be born in the future spotted and speckled and brownish. "These were there originally". And a further reason why these should be set apart is, in order that you may not be able to say to me, "Because of the male animals that are speckled and spotted the females will give birth from now onwards to offspring of their own kind" (i.e., speckled etc.).

Verse 33

וענתה בי צדקתי AND MY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL ANSWER FOR ME etc. — Should you suspect me of taking any animals that are yours my righteousness will answer for me, — for my righteousness will come and bear witness before thee as to my hire that you will find in my herd only speckled and spotted ones. Whatever, however, you find amongst them (amongst the animals) that is not speckled or spotted or brownish it will be certain that I have stolen it from your flocks and that it is in my possession by way of theft.

Verse 34

הן WELL! — an expression denoting agreement with a statement.
לו יהי כדברך I WOULD IT MIGHT BE ACCORDING TO THY WORD — Would that you will remain satisfied with this!

Verse 35

ויסר AND HE REMOVED i.e., Laban removed ביום ההוא ON THAT DAY
את התישים i.e. THE HE-GOATS.
כל אשר לבן בו EVERY ONE THAT HAD WHITE IN IT — all that had a white spot.
ויתן AND HE i.e. Laban, GAVE THEM ביד בניו INTO THE HAND OF HIS SONS.

Verse 36

הנותרות [THE FLOCK OF LABAN] THAT WAS LEFT — The defective animals amongst them, the sickly and the barren, which were nothing but the leavings — these he (Laban) handed over to him (Genesis Rabbah 73:9).

Verse 37

מקל לבנה STICKS OF לבנה — a tree that is called לבנה — just as you say (Hosea 4:13) "Under oaks and poplars (ולבנה)" I think it is what is called in old French tremble; English trembling-poplar, which is white.
לח FRESH — He took it when it was moist.
לוז ALMOND — He also took rods of לוז, a tree upon which small nuts growold French coudre; English hazel.
וערמון is old French chastenier, English chestnut.
פצלות STREAKS — many peelings so that he gave it the appearence of being striped.
מחשוף הלבן MAKING BARE THE WHITE — there was thus an uncovering of the white part of the rod: when he peeled it the white in it became uncovered and visible in the places where it was peeled.

Verse 38

ויצג AND HE SET — In the Targum it is rendered by ודעיץ which signifies in the Aramaic language sticking in and inserting. It occurs many times in the Talmud: (Shabbat 50b) "if he stuck it in (דצה) and pulled it out"; (Chullin 93b) "he stuck (דץ) something into it", where דצה is the same as דעצה, being really a contracted form of it.
ברהטים IN THE GUTTERS — in the currents (מרוצות) of water running in the trenches made in the ground to water the sheep there (רהט is the Aramaic of רוץ).
אשר תבאנה WHERE THE FLOCKS COME TO DRINK etc. — In the currents whither the sheep come to drink, there did he set the rods in front of the sheep.
ויחמנה AND THEY CONCEIVED — The female animal saw the rods, it was startled at the sight of them and recoiled; its mate then pairing with it, it afterwards gave birth to young marked similar to the rods (Genesis Rabbah 73:10).

Verse 39

אל המקלות means at the sight of the rods.
עקודים RING-STRAKED — the word is connected with the root עקד "to bind" — differently coloured at that place where they are bound, viz., the ankles of the forelegs and hindlegs.

Verse 40

והכשבים הפריד יעקב AND JACOB PARTED THE LAMBS — Those sheep that were thus born spotted on the ankles and speckled he separated and set apart by themselves, thus forming them into a separate flock. He led that spotted flock in front of ordinary sheep so that the faces of the sheep that followed behind them were gazing at them. This is what Scripture means in saying, "He set the faces of the flocks towards the spotted" — that the faces of the sheep were directed towards the spotted animals and towards all that were brownish which he found amongst Laban's sheep (i. e., amongst the sickly sheep which Laban had left him; cf. Genesis 5:36).
וישת לו עדרים means he formed them into a separate flock as I have already explained.

Verse 41

המקשרות THE STRONGER—Explain it as the Targum renders it: הבכירות the early-bearing sheep; but I have no evidence in the Scripture (i.e. I have no other example of the use of this word) to prove that this is its meaning. Menachem classifies it under the same root as (2 Samuel 15:31) "Ahitophel is among the conspirators (בקשרים)", and as (2 Samuel 15:12) "And the conspiracy (הקשר) was strong" — so that the meaning would be those sheep that banded themselves together (mated) in order to accelerate their pregnancy (i.e. in order that they might become בכירות, early-bearing sheep).

Verse 42

ובהעטיף WHEN THE FLOCKS WERE FEEBLE — the word has the meaning of "being late", as the Targum renders it בלקישות the late-bearing ones (cf. מלקוש the "latter" rain). Menachem classifies it under the same root as (Isaiah 3:22) "the aprons and the mantelets (המעטפות)", so that it has the meaning of wrapping oneself in a garment, and the word denotes those animals that are well wrapped up in their skin and fur so that they do not desire to be warmed by the males.

Verse 43

צאן רבות MANY SHEEP — sheep that multiplied and were fruitful more than other sheep (Genesis Rabbah 73:11).
ושפחות ועבדים AND HANDMAIDS, AND MEN-SERVANTS — he used to sell his sheep at a high price and he bought for himself all these (Tanchuma Yashan 1:7:24).

Chapter 31

Verse 1

עשה HE HATH MADE — i.e. gathered, as (1 Samuel 14:48) "And he gathered (ויעש) troops and smote the Amalekites".

Verse 2

Verse 3

שוב אל ארץ אבותיך RETURN UNTO THE LAND OF THY FATHERS — and there I will be with thee; but as long as you are associated with the unclean Laban it is impossible to make my Divine Presence (Shechina) rest upon you (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayetzei 10).

Verse 4

ויקרא לרחל וללאה AND HE CALLED RACHEL AND LEAH — First Rachel and afterwards Leah for she was the chief wife of the house for whose sake Jacob had entered into relations with Laban. Even the descendants of Leah admitted this (that Rachel was the principal wife), for Boaz and his Law-Court who were of the Tribe of Judah (Leah's son) said (Ruth 4:11) "like Rachel and like Leah which two did build etc.", mentioning Rachel before Leah (Genesis Rabbah 71:2).

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

עשרת מנים TEN TIMES — The word מנים never means less than ten (Ruth 4:11).
מנים signifies sum — the total of enumeration — these are tens: we may infer, therefore, that he changed the conditions of his hire one hundred times (Genesis Rabbah 74:3).

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

והנה העתדים BEHOLD THE RAMS — Although Laban had separated all these so that the sheep should not give birth to young marked similar to them, angels brought them from the flock which had been placed in charge of Laban's sons to the flock in Jacob's charge (Genesis Rabbah 73:10).
וברדים GRISLED — Explain it as the Targum renders it: פציחין open; old French faissie, checquered. There was a white stripe going right round the body, the spots of which it was composed being open and running from one end to the other. But I can bring no evidence from Scripture that this is the meaning.

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

האל בית אל is the same as אל בית אל the ה of האל being redundant. It is customary for Scripture to speak thus, e. g. (Numbers 34:2) "When ye come into the land of Canaan הארץ כנען (instead of ארץ כנען).
משחת שם WHERE THOU ANOINTEDST [A PILLAR] — This denotes distinction and eminence just as when one is anointed king one is raised to eminence: thus, too (Genesis 28:18) "and he poured oil upon the top of it (the stone)" that it might be anointed to be an altar (thus being distinguished among other stones).
אשר נדרת לי WHERE THOU VOWEDST A VOW UNTO ME —and you are bound to fulfill it, for you said (Genesis 28:22) "it shall be God's house", signifying that you would offer sacrifice there.

Verse 14

העוד לנו IS THERE YET ANY FOR US? — Why should we prevent you from returning? Can we at all hope to inherit anything belonging to our father together with his sons?

Verse 15

הלא נכריות נחשבנו לו ARE WE NOT THOUGHT ALIENS BY HIM? — Even at a time when it is customary for people to give a dowry to their daughters — at the time of their marriage — he treated us as strangers for he sold us to you in return for your labour during fourteen years
את כספנו [HAS EATEN] OUR MONEY — for he kept for himself the money for the wages of your labour during the next six years.

Verse 16

כי כל העשר FOR ALL THE RICHES — The word כי here means but; as much as to say: of our father's property we have nothing at all; but what The Holy One, blessed be He, has taken away from our father, that is ours. הציל means separated (or taken away). Similarly all forms from the Hiphil of this root occuring in Scripture (usually translated by "to deliver", "to rescue") mean taking away, for one who rescues a person takes him away from the misfortune or from the enemy.

Verse 17

את בניו ואת נשיו HIS SONS AND HIS WIVES — He took the males before the females whereas Esau took the females before the males, as it is said (Genesis 36:6) "And Esau took his wives and his sons etc." (Genesis Rabbah 74:5)

Verse 18

מקנה קנינו means — what he had purchased by means of קנינו his own property i.e. his sheep, viz., menservants, maidservants, camels and asses (Genesis Rabbah 74:5; cf. Rashi on Genesis 30:43).

Verse 19

לגזז את צאנו TO SHEAR HIS FLOCK which he had given into the charge of his sons at a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob.
ותגגב רחל את התרפים AND RACHEL STOLE THE TERAPHIM — her intention was to wean her father from idol-worship (Genesis Rabbah 74:5).

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

ביום השלישי ON THE THIRD DAY—for there was a journey of three days between them.

Verse 23

את אחיו HIS BRETHREN — i.e. his kinsmen.

דרך שבעת ימים SEVEN DAY'S JOURNEY — During all the three days during which the messenger had gone to tell Laban Jacob had proceeded on his journey. Consequently Jacob was then six days distance from Laban. On the seventh day i.e. on the day when Jacob covered that stretch of ground which made him seven days distant from Laban's starting point Laban overtook him. We may infer, therefore, that all the distance that Jacob would have taken seven days to cover Laban covered in one day. And thus it states: "and he pursued after him seven day's journey" and it does not say "and he pursued after him for seven days" (Genesis Rabbah 74:6).

Verse 24

מטוב עד רע EITHER GOOD OR EVIL — why should he not speak good? Because all the good that the wicked do to the righteous is evil in the opinion of the righteous (Yevamot 103b).

Verse 25

Verse 26

כשבויות חרב AS CAPTIVES TAKEN BY THE SWORD — an army going to war is termed "sword".

Verse 27

ותגנב אתי — means thou didst steal away my mind (as in Genesis 5:26).

Verse 28

Verse 29

יש לאל ידי means MY HAND HAS THE STRENGTH AND THE POWER — to do you hurt (אל therefore means strength and יש לאל ידי is equivalent to יש אל לידי). Wherever אל is used as a Divine Name it is because it signifies strength and abundance of power.

Verse 30

נכספתה means THOU DIDST LONG—It occurs many times in Scripture: (Psalms 89:3) "My soul yearneth (נכספה) yea, pineth"; (Job 14:15) "Thou wouldst have a desire (תכסוף) to the work of hands".

Verse 31

כי יראתי BECAUSE I FEARED — He answered his first question first, for he had asked him (Genesis 31:26) "[what hast thou done…] that thou hast carried away my daughters etc." (this being the first of all Laban's questions).

Verse 32

לא יחיה LET HIM NOT LIVE — In consequence of this curse Rachel died on the journey (Genesis Rabbah 74:9).
מה עמדי WHAT IS WITH ME that belongs to you.

Verse 33

באהל יעקב INTO JACOB'S TENT — This was Rachel's tent also, for Jacob was constantly with her. For the same reason Scripture says (46:19) "the sons of Rachel Jacob's wife", whilst in the case of the other wives it does not state "Jacob's wife" (Genesis Rabbah 74:9).
ויבא באהל רחל AND HE CAME INTO RACHEL'S TENT — When he left Leah's tent he returned again to Rachel's tent before he searched the tent of the two maid-servants. Why did he feel compelled to do all this? Because he knew full well that she was meddlesome (Genesis Rabbah 74:9).

Verse 34

בכר הגמל IN THE CAMEL'S SADDLE-PILLOW — כר has the same meaning as in the Talmudic phrase "pillows (כרים) and bolsters". Explain it as the Targum renders it: "in the עביטא of the camel". This is a packsaddle made like a pillow. In Erubin (Eruvin 16a) we find, "they enclosed it with עביטין" by which is meant the saddles of camels. old French bast, bat; English packsaddle.

Verse 35

Verse 36

דלקת means THOU HAST PURSUED — as in (Lamentations 4:19) "They chased us (דלקנו) upon the mountains", and (1 Samuel 17:53) ''from chasing (מדלק) after the Philistines".

Verse 37

ויוכיחו — means that they may decide who is right. old French eprouver; English prove.

Verse 38

לא שכלו means HAVE NOT MISCARRIED — Similar are: (Hosea 9:14) ''a miscarrying (משכיל) womb"; (Job 21:10) "his cow calveth and casteth (תשכל) not her calf".
ואילי צאנך AND THE RAMS OF THY FLOCK — From this phrase they (the Rabbis) inferred (Bava Kamma 65b) that a male sheep even when one day old is called a ram; for if this be not so, how was this creditable to him? Did he mean that he had not eaten rams (i. e. the larger animals), but that he had eaten the smaller sheep? If so, he was a thief! (39).

Verse 39

טרפה THAT WHICH WAS TORN by a lion or a wolf.
אנכי אחטנה I BARE THE LOSS OF IT — It has the same meaning as the verb in (Judges 20:16) "sling stones at a hair-breadth and not miss (יחטא)", and (1 Kings 1:21) "that I and my son Solomon shall suffer the loss of it (חטאים)" i.e. shall be lacking in authority. The sense therefore is: "I" was short of it; if it was missing, it was missing to me because you required it of my hand.
אנכי אחטנה In the Targum it is translated by דהות שגיא ממנינא which means that which was missing and deficient from the number of the animals. The words (Numbers 31:49) "There is missing (נפקד) not one man of us", is rendered in the Targum by ולא שגיא
גנבתי יום וגנבתי לילה WHETHER STOLEN BY DAY OR STOLEN BY NIGHT — everything I paid back.

גנבתי As regards the suffix י it is similar to the י in (Lamentations 1:1) "great (רבתי) among the nations, princess (שרתי) among the provinces"; (Isaiah 1:21) "that was full of (מלאתי) justice"; (Hosea 10:11) "that loveth (אהבתי) to thresh".

Verse 40

אכלני חרב THE DROUGHT CONSUMED ME — the same metaphor as (Deuteronomy 4:24) אש אכלה "a consuming fire".
וקרח THE FROST — as (Psalms 147:17) "He casteth forth his ice (קרחו)". In the Targum it is rendered by גלידא "hoar-frost".
שנתי means MY SLEEP.

Verse 41

ותחלף את משכרתי AND THOU HAST CHANGED MY HIRE — You have altered the agreement regarding my hire between us from speckled to spotted and from streaked to grisled.

Verse 42

ופחד יצחק AND THE DREAD OF ISAAC — He did not like to say "God of Isaac" because God does not associate His name with the righteous whilst they are alive. And although He (God) said, when he (Jacob) was departing from Beer-Sheba, (Genesis 28:13) "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac", this was because his (Isaac's) eyes were dim and he might therefore be regarded as dead (Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 7) — Jacob, however, feared to say "God of Isaac" and said "the Dread".
ויוכח The word here has the meaning of reproof ("and he reproved thee"; cf. Genesis 5:24) and not of deciding (as in Genesis 5:37).

Verse 43

מה אעשה לאלה WHAT CAN I DO UNTO THEM — How could it enter my mind injure them, my daughters!

Verse 44

והיה לעד means and LET GOD BE FOR A WITNESS.

Verse 45

Verse 46

לאחיו UNTO HIS BRETHREN — really his sons, who were like brothers to him since they were standing by him in trouble and in battle (Genesis Rabbah 74:13).

Verse 47

יגר שהדותא This is the Aramaic of גלעד.
גלעד — is really two words — גל עד heap of testimony.

Verse 48

Verse 49

והמצפה אשר אמר AND MIZPAH (literally, the Mizpah); BECAUSE HE SAID etc. — The word והמצפה and the Mizpah must refer to some well-known place bearing this name (for there are several places named Mizpah) it refers to the Mizpah which is in Mount Gilead — as it is written (Judges 11:29) "and he passed over Mizpah of Gilead". Why was it also called Mizpah? Because each of them said to the other, "The Lord watch (יצף) between me and thee that thou shouldst not violate this covenant".
כי נסתר WHEN WE ARE ABSENT, and shall not see (be able to watch) one another.

Verse 50

בנתי....בנתי The word is written twice, referring once to Leah and Rachel and the second time to the handmaids, because Bilhah and Zilpah were also his daughters from a concubine (Genesis Rabbah 74:13).
אם תענה את בנתי IF THOU SHALT AFFLICT MY DAUGHTERS by refusing them thy companionship (Yoma 77b).

Verse 51

יריתי I HAVE SET UP (by casting stones down); the word has the same meaning as (Exodus 15:4) "He cast (ירה) into the sea". Laban speaks like a person who casts (יורה) one arrow (Midrash Rabbah has "one spear") and boasts of his prowess.

Verse 52

אם אני THAT I WILL NOT — Here the word אם is used in the sense of אשר "that", as (Genesis 24:33) "until that (אם) I have spoken my words".
לרעה FOR EVIL — For evil you may not pass, but for trading purposes (as e. g., with a caravan) you may pass (Genesis Rabbah 74:16).

Verse 53

אלהי אברהם GOD OF ABRAHAM — Here the word אלהים is holy (i.e. it is the Divine Name). (Genesis Rabbah 74:17)
אלהי נחור THE GOD OF NAHOR — Here the name is non-holy (i.e. it is a designation for an idol) (Genesis Rabbah 74:17).
אלהי אביהם THE GOD OF THEIR FATHER — Here the name is non-holy (Genesis Rabbah 74:17).

Verse 54

ויזבח יעקב זבח AND JACOB OFFERED A SACRIFICE — he slaughtered cattle for the feast
לאחיו HIS BRETHREN — those of his friends who were with Laban (cf Targum Jonathan)
לאכל לחם TO EAT BREAD — Any article of food is termed לחם bread, as (Daniel 5:1) "made a great feast (לחם רב)", and (Jeremiah 11:19) "Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof (בלחמו)".

Chapter 32

Verse 1

Verse 2

ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלהים AND THE ANGELS OF GOD MET HIM — The angels who minister in the Land of Israel came to meet him in order to escort him into the Holy Land (see Genesis Rabbah 74:17).

Verse 3

מחנים means two camps — the one consisting of the angels ministering outside the Holy Land who had come with him thus far, the other, of those ministering in the Land of Israel who had come to meet him (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayishlach 3).

Verse 4

וישלח יעקב מלאכים AND JACOB SENT MESSENGERS (Heb. מלאכים angels) — actually angels (Genesis Rabbah 75:4).
ארצה שעיר means TO THE LAND OF SEIR — A word that requires a ל as prefix has a ה placed as a suffix (Yevamot 13b).

Verse 5

גרתי I HAVE SOJOURNED — I have become neither a prince nor other person of importance but merely a sojourner. It is not worth your while to hate me on account of the blessing of your father who blessed me (27:29) "Be master over thy brethren", for it has not been fulfilled in me (Tanchuma Yashan 1:8:5). Another explanation: the word גרתי has the numerical value of 613 - תרי"ג - it is as much as to say, "Though I have sojourned with Laban, the wicked, I have observed the תרי"ג מצות, the 613 Divine Commandments, and I have learned naught of his evil ways.

Verse 6

ויהי לי שור וחמור AND I HAVE OXEN AND ASSES — Our father promised me, (27:28) "[God will give thee] of the dew of heaven and of the fat places of the earth" — these are neither of the heaven nor of the earth
שור וחמור (literally, an ox and an ass) — It is the customary thing to speak of many oxen as an ox (Genesis Rabbah 75:6) — a man says to his fellow, "During the night the cock crowed"; he does not say "the cocks crowed"
ואשלחה להגיד לאדוני AND I HAVE SENT TO TELL MY LORD — to announce that I am coming to you.
למצא חן בעיניך THAT I MAY FIND FAVOUR IN THY EYES, for I am at peace with you and seek your friendship.

Verse 7

באנו אל אחיך אל עשו WE CAME TO THY BROTHER, TO ESAU — to him of whom you said he is my brother, but he behaves towards you as Esau, the wicked — he is still harbouring hatred (Genesis Rabbah 75:7).

Verse 8

ויירא...ויצר HE FEARED GREATLY AND WAS DISTRESSED — He was afraid lest he be killed, and he was distressed that he might have to kill someone (Genesis Rabbah 76:2).

Verse 9

והכהו המחנה האחת TO THE ONE CAMP AND SMITE IT — The word מחנה is treated grammatically as masculine or feminine: in (Psalms 27:3) "Though a camp should encamp (תחנה) against me" it is feminine; in (Genesis 33:8) "this (הזה) camp" it is masculine. Similarly there are other words treated grammatically as both masculine and feminine. For example, the word שמש in (Genesis 19:23) "The sun was risen (יצא) upon the earth" and in (Psalms 19:7) "His (the sun's) going forth (מוצאו) is from the end of the heaven"; here it is masculine, but in (2 Kings 3:22) "and the sun shone (זרחה) upon the water" it is feminine. Similarly with רוח: in (Job 1:19) "and behold there came (באה) a great wind" it is feminine, and in the same verse "and smote (ויגע) the four corners of the house" it is masculine; in (1 Kings 19:11) "and a great (גדולה) and strong (וחזק) wind rent (מפרק) the mountains" it is both masculine and feminine. So also in the case of אש: in (Numbers 16:35) "and fire came forth (יצאה) from the Lord" it is feminine, and in (Psalms 104:4) "The flaming (להט) fire" it is masculine.
והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה THEN THE REMAINING CAMP MAY ESCAPE in spite of him, for I will fight against him He prepared himself for three things: to give him a present — as it states (Genesis 32:22) "So, the present passed before him"; for prayer — as it states (Genesis 32:10), "And he said, 'O God of my father Abraham"; for war — as it states in this verse, "then the remaining camp may escape", for I will fight against him (Tanchuma Yashan 1:8:6).

Verse 10

ואלהי אבי יצחק AND GOD OF MY FATHER ISAAC — But in another place (Genesis 31:42) he said, "And the Dread of Isaac"! Then also why did he again mention the Proper Name of God (first invoking him as God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and then continuing "O Lord, who saidst unto me")? It should have been written "O God of Abraham and God of Isaac (omitting 'O Lord') who saidst unto me, "Return unto thy country" etc. But the explanation is as follows: Jacob said to the Holy One, blessed be He, "You made me two promises. One was when I left my father's house at Beersheba when You said to me (Genesis 28:3) "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac", and on that occasion you promised me (Genesis 28:15) "and I will keep thee whithersoever thou goest". Then again in Laban's house You said to me (Genesis 31:3) "Return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred and I will be with thee". There You revealed Yourself to me by Your Proper Name alone, as it is said (Genesis 31:3) "And the Lord said unto Jacob "Return unto the land of thy fathers etc." Relying upon these two promises I now come before You invoking you as "the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac" and also simply as "the Lord" under which names You made me these two promises respectively.

Verse 11

קטנתי מכל החסדים I AM TOO UNWORTHY OF ALL THE MERCIES (This may be rendered "I am small — unworthy — because of all the kindnesses) — My merits are diminished in consequence of all the kindness and truth which You have already shown me. For this reason I am afraid: perhaps, since You made these promises to me, I have become depraved (נתקלקלתי) by sin (another version of Rashi has נתלכלכתי, I have become defiled by sin) and this may cause me to be delivered unto Esau's power (Shabbat 32a).
ומכל האמת [my merits are diminished in consequence] OF ALL THE TRUTH — of the true fulfillment (אמיתת) of Your promises — because You have already kept all the promises You made me
כי במקלי FOR WITH MY STAFF — I had with me neither silver nor gold nor cattle — only this staff of mine. The Midrashic explanation is, that he

had placed his staff in the Jordan and Jordan had divided for him to pass over.

Verse 12

מיד אחי מיד עשו FROM THE HAND OF MY BROTHER, FROM THE HAND OF ESAU — from the hand of my brother who does not treat me as a brother should, but as Esau, the wicked.

Verse 13

היטב איטיב I WILL SURELY DO [THEE] GOOD — The use of two words denoting "doing good" is intended to signify: היטב doing good to thee on account of your own merits, איטיב I will also do good to thee on account of your father's merits (Genesis Rabbah 76:7).
ושמתי את זרעך כחול הים AND I WILL MAKE THY SEED AS THE SAND OF THE SEA — Where, indeed, did God promise him this? Did he not promise him only (Genesis 28:14) "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth"? But the explanation is that He had at the same time promised him (Genesis 28:15) "for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken about thee", and to Abraham he had promised (Genesis 22:17) "and I will greatly multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore".

Verse 14

הבא בידו AND TOOK OF THAT WHICH CAME TO HIS HAND (literally, in his hand) — in his possession, similar to (Numbers 21:26) "and he had taken all his land out of his possession (מידו)." A Midrashic explanation is: מן הבא בידו — precious stones and jewels which a person ties up in a package and carries in his hand. Another explanation is: מן הבא בידו THAT WHICH A MAN MAY TAKE INTO HIS OWN POSSESSION — of that which no longer has a sacred character — for he had set aside the tithe, just as you read (28:22) "[And Jacob vowed] … I will surely give the tenth unto Thee". Only afterwards did he take the present of what was left after the tithe had been set aside, and this was that which he might rightly take into his own possession.

Verse 15

עזים מאתים ותישים עשרים TWO HUNDRED SHE GOATS AND TWENTY HE GOATS — Two hundred she goats have need of twenty he goats, and so too in the case of all the various species the males were in number according to the need of the females. In Genesis Rabbah 76:7 an inference is made from here as regards the minimum period imperative for the marital duty imposed by the Torah - [for] the men of leisure, every day; [for] the laborers, twice a week; [for] the donkey drivers, once a week; [for] the camel drivers, once in thirty days, [for] the sailors, once in six months. I am unable however to show exactly how this inference is arrived at. But it appears to me that we may learn from here at least that this period is not the same for every person, but that it depends upon the amount of labor imposed upon him by his occupation. As we have found here that ten she goats were given to each he goat, and so [too] to each ram; [as] since they are free from work, their way is to be frequently involved in sexual relations and to impregnate ten females - and once an animal becomes pregnant, it does not accept a male. And [concerning] the bulls that engage in work, it only gave four females to the male; and to the donkey who goes on long journeys, [it gave] two females to the male; and to the camels that go on [even] longer journeys, [it gave] one female to the male.

Verse 16

גמלים מיניקות MILCH CAMELS שלשים THIRTY, ובניהם means AND THEIR COLTS with them — A Midrashic explanation of ובניהם is that it is the same as וּבָנָאֵיהֶם their builders (those that build them up) i.e., one male for each female. Because, however, it (the camel) is chaste in its ways Scripture does not state this plainly (Genesis Rabbah 76:7) but employs a term from which it may be inferred.
ועירים means MALE ASSES.

Verse 17

עדר עדר לבדו EVERY DROVE BY ITSELF — each species forming a drove by itself.
עברו לפני PASS ON BEFORE ME, a day's journey or less and I shall follow you).
ורוח תשימו AND PUT A SPACE — one drove before the other at a distance as far as the eye can see, in order to satisfy the eye (the cupidity) of that wicked man and to amaze him by the size of the gift (Genesis Rabbah 76:8).

Verse 18

למי אתה means TO WHOM DO YOU BELONG, implying who has sent thee? The Targum should be דמאן את "of whom are you" and not למאן את as some editions have.
ולמי אלה לפניך means and these which are before you whose are they; i.e. to whom is this present being sent? The letter ל is used as a prefix in place of של "belonging to"; e.g., (31:43) "and all that thou seest is mine (לי)" i.e. belongs to me; (Psalms 24:1) "The earth is the Lord's (לה') and the fullness thereof" i.e. belongs to the Lord.

Verse 19

ואמרת לעבדך ליעקב THEN SHALT THOU SAY THEY ARE THY SERVANT JACOB'S — You shall answer the first question first and the last question last, saying :"In reply to what you have asked", "Whose art thou?", "I belong to thy servant Jacob" — and it should be rendered in the Targum דעבדך דיעקב belonging to your servant, belonging to Jacob" —and in reply to what you have asked, "And whose are these before thee?" "It is a present sent etc."
והנה גם הוא AND, BEHOLD, ALSO HE IS BEHIND US — The word "he" refers to Jacob.

Verse 20

Verse 21

אכפרה פניו I WILL APPEASE HIM — I will remove his anger. Similarly, (Isaiah 28:18) "and your covenant with death shall be annulled (וכפר)"; (Isaiah 47:11) "Thou shalt not be able to put it away (וכפרה)". I am of the opinion that wherever the verb כפר is used in association with iniquity and sin and in association with anger (פנים), it always signifies wiping away, removing. It is an Aramaic expression occurring frequently in the Talmud: "He wiped his hand off (כפר ידיה)", and (Gittin 56a) ''he wants to wipe (לכפורי) his hands off on this man" (i.e. he desires to put the responsibility upon me). In Biblical Hebrew, also, the

bowls of the Sanctuary are called, (Ezra 1:10) "כפורי of gold" — and they are so called because the priest wiped his hands on them — on the rim of the bowl (Zevachim 93b).

Verse 22

The Midrash connects the word פניו in על פניו with פנים anger — he (Jacob) was also in an angry mood that it should be necessary for him to do all this (Genesis Rabbah 76:8).

Verse 23

ואת אחד עשר ילדיו AND HIS ELEVEN CHILDREN — But where was Dinah? He placed her in a chest and locked her in so that Esau should not set his fancy upon her (desire to marry her). On this account Jacob was punished — because he had kept her away from his brother for she might have led him back to the right path; she therefore fell into the power of Shechem (Genesis Rabbah 76:9).
יבק JABBOK — the name of the river.

Verse 24

את אשר לו [HE MADE PASS] THAT WHICH WAS HIS — the cattle and movables. He acted as a ferry-man taking them from one side and setting them down on the other.

Verse 25

ויותר יעקב AND JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE — He had forgotten some small jars and he returned for them (Chullin 91a).
ויאבק איש AND A MAN WRESTLED — Menachem (ben Seruk) explains: "a man covered himself with dust", taking the verb as connected in sense with אבק "dust". It would mean that they were raising the dust with their feet through their movements. I, however, am of opinion that it means "he fastened himself on", and that it is an Aramaic word, as (Sanhedrin 63b) "after they have joined (אביקו) it", and (Menachot 42a) "and he twined (the "Fringes") with loops". It denotes "intertwining", for such is the manner of two people who make strong efforts to throw each other — one clasps the other and twines himself round him with his arms. Our Rabbis of blessed memory explained that he was Esau's guardian angel (Genesis Rabbah 77:3).

Verse 26

ויגע בכף ירכו HE TOUCHED THE HOLLOW OF HIS THIGH — The upper thigh-bone that is sunk in the hip is called כף because the flesh on it (on this bone) has the form of the hollow part of a pot-ladle (כף).
ותקע AND WAS STRAINED — It was violently torn from its joint. Similar in meaning is (Jeremiah 6:8) "Lest My soul be alienated (תקע) from thee" — i.e. removed from thee; and in the Mishna, לקעקע בצתם, which means to remove violently (לשרש) their roots.

Verse 27

כי עלה השחר FOR THE DAY BREAKETH, and I have to sing God's praise at day (Chullin 91b; Genesis Rabbah 78:1).
ברכתני [EXCEPT] THOU BLESS ME — admit my right to the blessings which my father gave me and to which Esau lays claim.

Verse 28

Verse 29

לא יעקב [THY NAME SHALL] NO MORE BE CALLED JACOB [BUT ISRAEL] (literally, "not Jacob — supplanting — shall any more be said to thee") — It shall no longer be said that the blessings came to you through supplanting and subtlety but through noble conduct (שררה) and in an open manner. Because later on the Holy One, blessed be He, will reveal Himself to you at Bethel and will change your name. There He will bless you, and I shall be there and admit your right to them (the blessings). It is to this that the passage refers (Hosea 12:5), "And he strove with an angel and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him" — it means the angel wept and made supplication unto him (Jacob). What was the subject of his supplication? This is stated in the next verse: "At Bethel He will meet us and there He will speak with us — implying the request. "Wait until he will speak with us there, and then I will admit your right to the blessings." Jacob, however, would not agree to this, and against his own wish he had to admit his right to the blessings. That is what is meant when it states (v. 30) "And he declared him blessed there", that he begged him to wait and he did not agree to do so (cp. Genesis Rabbah 78:2).
ועם אנשים AND WITH MEN —Esau and Laban.
ותוכל AND HAST PREVAILED over them.

Verse 30

למה זה תשאל WHEREFORE IS IT THAT THOU DOST ASK [AFTER MY NAME]? — We have no fixed names; our names change, all depending upon the service we are commanded to carry out as the errand with which we are charged (Genesis Rabbah 78:4).

Verse 31

Verse 32

וישרח לו השמש AND THE SUN SHONE UPON HIM— This is the expression that people use: "When we reached such-and-such a place the dawn broke upon us". This is its literal sense. But the Midrash says that לו means, "for his needs" — to heal his lameness. Thus, too, you read in Scripture a similar metaphor (Malachi 3:20) "the sun of righteousness with healing in its wings". The hours that it had set before its time for his sake when he left Beer-Sheba (cp. Genesis 18:11) it now rose before its time for his sake (Sanhedrin 75b).
והוא צלע AND HE LIMPED — He was limping when the sun rose.

Verse 33

גיד הנשה THE SINEW OF THE THIGH-VEIN — Why is its name called גיד הנשה? Because it sprang נשה) and rose from its proper position. The word has the meaning of "springing". Other examples are: (Jeremiah 51:30) "Their strength sprang away (נשתה)" and (41:51) "for God hath made all my trouble spring away from me נַשַּׁנִי)".

Chapter 33

Verse 1

Verse 2

ואת לאה וילדיה אחרנים AND LEAH AND HER CHILDREN AFTER — The more behind — the more beloved (Genesis Rabbah 78:8).

Verse 3

עבר לפניהם [AND HE HIMSELF] PASSED BEFORE THEM — He thought: if that wicked man comes to fight let him fight me first (Genesis Rabbah 78:8).

Verse 4

ויחבקהו AND EMBRACED HIM — His pity was aroused when he saw him prostrating himself so many times (Genesis Rabbah 78:8).
וישקהו AND HE KISSED HIM — Dots are placed above the letters of this word, and a difference of opinion is expressed in the Baraitha of Sifré (בהעלותך) as to what these dots are intended to suggest: some explain the dotting as meaning that he did not kiss him with his whole heart, whereas R Simeon the son of Johai said: Is it not well-known that Esau hated Jacob? But at that moment his pity was really aroused and he kissed him with his whole heart. (Sifrei Bamidbar 69.2)

Verse 5

מי אלה לך WHO ARE THESE WITH THEE? (literally, to thee)? — Who are these that they should be yours (are they your children or your servants)?

Verse 6

Verse 7

נגש יוסף ורחל JOSEPH AND RACHEL STEPPED NEAR — In the case of all the others the mothers approached before the children, but in the case of Rachel, Joseph came in front of her. He said: “My mother is a beautiful woman: for fear that this wicked man will set his fancy on her I will stand in front of her and prevent him from gazing at her ” As a reward for this Joseph merited the blessing associated with the words עלי עין "with the eye” (Genesis Rabbah 78:10).

Verse 8

מי לך כל המחנה WHAT MEANEST THOU BY ALL THIS CAMP? — What is all this camp that I have met which belongs to you — as much as to say: what do you intend by it? Scripture really uses the word המחנה in reference to those who were bringing the present. A Midrashic explanation is: He had met companies of angels who thrust him and his men aside, asking them, “Who are you?” These replied, “We belong to Esau”. Whereupon the angels exclaimed, “Smite, smite!” They (Esau’s men) then said, “Let him alone; he is a son of Isaac”. They took no notice of this. “He is a grandson of Abraham”. Again they took no notice of this. “He is Jacob’s brother". Whereupon they said: if this be so, you are one with us” (Genesis Rabbah 78:11).

Verse 9

יהי לך אשר לך BE THINE THAT WHICH IS THINE — In these words he admitted his right to the blessings (Genesis Rabbah 78:11).

Verse 10

אל נא NAY, I PRAY THEE — Do not, I pray thee, speak to me thus.
אם נא מצאתי חן בעיניך ולקחת מנחתי מידי כי על כן ראיתי פניך וגו' IF NOW I HAVE FOUND FAVOUR IN THY EYES THEN TAKE MY PRESENT AT MY HAND: FOR THEREFORE I HAVE SEEN THY FACE etc. — Accept my present because (כי) it is fitting and proper for you to accept my present, for that (על כן) I have seen your face which is as dear to me as the sight of the angel — for I have seen your guardian angel. And a further reason why you should accept my present is ותרצני — because you have agreed to pardon my offence. Why, however, did he mention to him that he had seen the angel? In order that he (Esau) should be afraid of him saying, "He has seen angels and nevertheless escaped safely! Now, certainly, I shall be unable to overcome him" (Sotah 41b)
ותרצני AND THOU WAST PLEASED WITH ME — You are reconciled with me. Wherever the term רצה (the verb, or the noun רצון) occurs in Scripture it means "propitiating"; old French appaisement; English appeasing. An example is, (Leviticus 22:20) "It shall not be (לרצון) acceptable as a propitiatory sacrifice to you", for the purpose of the sacrifices is to conciliate and to propitiate. Similarly (Proverbs 10:31) "The lips of the righteous know רצון — they understand to conciliate and propitiate.

Verse 11

ברכתי means MY PRESENT — a present such as this that is brought, when one has an audience with a person after an interval of time is intended only as a greeting. Now wherever the term "blessing" (ברכה) is used in connection with an audience — as for example, (47:7) "Jacob blessed (ויברך) Pharaoh", and (2 Kings 18:31) "make your peace (ברכה) with me" mentioned in connection with Sennacherib, and also (2 Samuel 8:10) to salute him and to bless him (לברכו)" mentioned in connection with Toi, King of Hamath — they all signify greeting, O.I. saluer. So that here, too: ברכתי really means "mon salut" — my greetings and the term is then transferred to the greeting-present.
אשר הבאת לך THAT IS BROUGHT TO THEE without any exertion on your part. I have myself taken the trouble to bring it all this way until it has reached your hand (Genesis Rabbah 78:12).
וַיְחֻנֵּנִי GOD HATH FAVOURED ME — The first נ has a Dagesh, because it serves the purpose of two נ's since it should have said וַיְחָנְנִי as we always find the forms of חנן with two נ's. The third נ here (Rashi means the third that is pronounced) serves as part of the accusative pronominal suffix (meaning "me"), as (Isaiah 29:16) עשני "He made me", and as (30:20) זבדני "he endowed me".
יש לי כל I HAVE EVERYTHING — all that will supply my needs. But Esau spoke proudly (v. 8): I have (רב) abundance — far more than my needs.

Verse 12

נסעה is an imperative like שְׁמָעָה and שְׁלָחָה which are equivalent to שְׁמַע "hearken!" and שְׁלַח "send!" Similarly here, נִסְעָה is equivalent to נְסַע "travel on!", where the נ is a root-letter of the word and not the prefix of the future in which case the word would mean "let us travel on", similar to the following word ונלכה "and let us go". The Targum also takes it in this sense, rendering it: "Travel on and let us go". Thus Esau said to Jacob, "Travel thou on from here and let us go etc.

ואלכה לנגדך means AND I WILL GO SIDE BY SIDE WITH THEE — I will do you this favour: that I will take a longer time on my journey by going slowly as is necessary for you. This is the meaning of לנגדך — alongside of you.

Verse 13

עלות עלי WITH YOUNG ARE WITH ME — The sheep and the oxen which are giving suck constitute a charge upon me (עלי) to drive them slowly.
עלות means bringing up their young. Words of the same root are found in (Lamentations 2:11) "young children (עולל) and the sucklings": (IsaiahLXV.20) "an infant (עול) of days": (1 Samuel 6:7) "and two milch kine (עלות)". old French enfantées.
ודפקום יום אחד AND IF MEN SHOULD OVERDRIVE THEM, wearying them on the journey by making them run, מתו כל הצאן ALL THE FLOCKS WILL DIE.
ודפקום has the same meaning as in (Song. 5:2) "Hark, my beloved knocketh (דופק)" — knocks at the door — so that it means to beat the animals in order that they may travel quickly.

Verse 14

יעבר נא אדני LET MY LORD, I PRAY THEE, PASS — do not prolong the time of your journey: pass on at your usual speed even though you thereby get far away from me.
אתנהלה is the same as אתנהל I WILL LEAD ON. The ה at the end of the word is redundant as in (8:21) ארדה "I will go down", and in (Psalms 85:9) אשמעה "I will hear".
לאטי SLOWLY — the word means "my slowness", לאט having the meaning of ease, gentleness. Examples are: (Isaiah 8:6) "that go (לאט) softly"; (2 Samuel 18:6) "Deal (לאט) gently for my sake with the young man." In לאטי the ל is a root-letter and not a prefix, so that the meaning is, "I will lead on at my slow rate".
לרגל המלאכה ACCORDING TO THE PACE OF THE DROVE — according to the requirements made by the pace of the feet of the cattle which is incumbent on me to drive.
ולרגל הילדים AND ACCORDING TO THE PACE OF THE CHILDREN — according to the speed (רגל) which they are able to keep up.
עד אשר אבא אל אדני שעירה UNTIL I COME UNTO MY LORD UNTO SEIR — He mentioned a much longer journey, for he really intended to go only as far as Succoth (Avodah Zarah 25b). He said, "If he means to do me harm let him wait to do so until I reach his abode at Seir." Therefore he did not go to Seir. But when will he go? In the days of the Messiah, as it is said (Obadiah 1:21) "And saviours shall go up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau". There are many Midrashic explanations of this section.

Verse 15

ויאמר למה זה means AND HE SAID, WHY IS IT— that thou shouldst do me a favour which I do not need?"
אמצא חן בעיני אדני LET ME FIND FAVOUR IN THE EYES OF MY LORD and do not give me any recompense at present for the gifts I have made you.

Verse 16

וישב ביום ההוא עשו לדרכו SO ESAU RETURNED THAT DAY ON HIS WAY — Esau alone returned, but the four hundred men who had accompanied him slipped away from him one by one. When did the Holy One, blessed be He, reward them for this? In the days of David, as it is said (1 Samuel 30:17) (in reference to an attack which he made upon the Amalekites, descendants of Esau) "[and there escaped not a man of them] save four hundred young men who rode upon camels" (Genesis Rabbah 78:15).

Verse 17

ויבן לו בית AND HE BUILT FOR HIMSELF A HOUSE — He stayed there eighteen months — summer, winter and summer again (Megillah 17a); for the first mention of Succoth (booths which are erected for the cattle) points to the summer (when booths are necessary for the cattle), the mention of building a house to the winter, and the second mention of booths to the next summer.

Verse 18

שלם SAFELY (literally, whole, perfect, unimpaired) — unimpaired in body (health) because he was cured of his lameness; whole as regards his possessions for he was not short of anything even though he had given that gift (for his remaining cattle soon bore other young; cf. Rashi on Genesis 30:43); and perfect in his knowledge of the Torah for whilst he was in Laban's house he had not forgotten what he had before learned (Shabbat 33b).
עיר שכם — the word עיר is equivalent to לעיר to the city of. Similarly we have (Ruth 1:19) "until they came בית לחם" — "to Bethlehem".
בבאו מפדן ארם WHEN HE CAME FROM PADAN-ARAM — This is stated here in the same way as a person says to his neighbour, "that man there has come from between the teeth of the lion and has returned unhurt". Similarly here: he came whole from Padan-aram — from Laban and from Esau who had come to attack him on his journey.

Verse 19

קשיטה is a Meah (a certain coin) — Rabbi Akiba said, "When I visited the coast-towns I found that they called a Meah a Kesittah (Rosh Hashanah 26a). In the Targum it is rendered by זורפן good ones, current everywhere: the same idea as (23:16) "current with the merchant.

Verse 20

ויקרא לו אל אלהי ישראל AND HE CALLED IT EL-ELOHE ISRAEL — It does not mean that the altar was named "The God of Israel" thus bearing a Divine Name, but because the Holy One blessed be He, had been with him and delivered him he called the name of the altar by a term that had an allusion to the miracle, so that the praise of God might be mentioned when people called it by its name. Thus it would mean: He who is El, God — viz, the Holy One, blessed be He — is the God of me whose name is Israel. We find something similar in the case of Moses (Exodus 17:15): "And he called its (the altar's) name Adonai-Nissi. Not that the altar was called by the Divine Name Adonai, but he named the altar thus, to mention the praise of the Holy One, blessed be He: "The Lord — He is my banner!" Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, expounded it thus: that the Holy One, blessed be He, called Jacob by the name El. The verse therefore should be translated "and the God of Israel called him (Jacob) El" (Megillah 18a). And in reference to all these different explanations it may be said that the words of the Torah — just as a hammer splits the rock into many different pieces (Shabbat 88b) — may be given many different explanations. I however make it my aim to give the plain sense of Scripture.

Chapter 34

Verse 1

בת לאה THE DAUGHTER OF LEAH — so Scripture calls her. Why not the daughter of Jacob? But just because she "went out" she is called Leah's daughter, since she, too, was fond "of going out" (Genesis Rabbah 80:1), as it is said (30:16) "and Leah went out to meet him". With an allusion to her they formulated the proverb: "Like mother, like daughter".

Verse 2

וישכב אתה AND HE LAID WITH HER — naturally (vaginally).
ויענה AND HE AFFLICTED HER — unnaturally (anally) (Genesis Rabbah 80:1).

Verse 3

על לב הנערה [AND SPAKE] LOVINGLY TO THE DAMSEL (literally, he spoke to the heart of the maiden) words that would appeal to her heart: See how much money your father has lavished for a small plot of field. I will marry you and you will then possess the city and all its fields (Genesis Rabbah 80:7).

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

וכן לא יעשה AND THUS IT OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE — viz., to do violence to a maiden, for even the heathens have trained themselves (literally, have fenced themselves round) against unchastity as a consequence of the Flood which had come upon the world as a punishment for this sin (Genesis Rabbah 80:6).

Verse 8

תשקה means desires.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

מהר DOWRY, refers to the Ketuba (the sum settled by the husband on his wife as set forth in the Ketuba — the marriage contract (Genesis Rabbah 80:7).

Verse 13

במרמה WITH GUILE — cleverly
אשר טמא BECAUSE HE HAD DEFILED — Scripture (the Sacred Historian) says that there was no deception (מרמה) in this because he had defiled Dinah their sister (Genesis Rabbah 80:8).

Verse 14

חרפה הוא THAT WERE A DISGRACE — Amongst us it is somewhat of a blot on our pedigree, for if one wishes to revile another, he says to him: "You are an uncircumcised person", or "the son of an uncircumcised person". The word חרפה always means "reviling".

Verse 15

נאות לכם means WE WILL CONSENT UNTO YOU: it has the same meaning as (2 Kings 12:9) ויאותו "and they consented".
להמול means TO BE CIRCUMCISED — It is not an active infinitive (Kal), but a passive infinitive (Niphal).

Verse 16

וְנָתַנּוּ THEN WILL WE GIVE — The second נ has a Dagesh because it serves the purpose of two -נס - וְנָתַנּוּנוּ (cf. Rashi on Genesis 33:11 חנני).
ואת בנותיכם נקח לנו AND WE WILL TAKE YOUR DAUGHTERS TO US — You will find that in the proposition which Hamor made to Jacob (Genesis 34:9) and in the reply of Jacob's sons to Hamor (in this verse) they (both parties to the proposition) regarded the sons of Jacob as being the more important — that they should take of the daughters of Shechem whomsoever they would select for themselves and that they should give their daughters to them (the men of Shechem) as they (Jacob's sons) would think fit, as it is written, "and we will give our daughters'' — as we think fit — "and we will take your daughters unto us" — whomsoever we please. When, however, Hamor and his son spoke to the inhabitants of their city (v. 21) they reversed the matter, saying, "their daughters we will take to us for wives, and our daughters we will give unto them", instead of saying "they will give their daughters to us, and they will take our daughters to themselves", in order to induce them to consent to be circumcised.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

שלמים means peaceable and whole hearted.
והארץ הנה רחבת ידים FOR THE LAND, BEHOLD, IT IS LARGE ENOUGH (literally, wide-handed) — the metaphor is that of a man whose hand is large and generous, and the idea is: "You will lose nothing if they dwell and trade in the land, for much merchandise is brought here and there are no buyers for it".

Verse 22

בהמול means by every male of us being circumcised (infinitive Niphal).

Verse 23

אך נאותה להם LET US CONSENT UNTO THEM in this matter, and because of this they will dwell with us.

Verse 24

Verse 25

שני בני יעקב TWO OF THE SONS OF JACOB — They were his sons (the sons of Jacob, a wise and clever man), but they acted as any man named Simeon and Levi would do — as other people would do who were not his sons — for they did not take counsel with him (Genesis Rabbah 80:10).
אחי דינה DINAH'S BROTHERS — because they risked their lives for her they are designated as her brothers (Genesis Rabbah 80:10)
בטח IN SECURITY — because they (the men of Shechom) were ill. The Midrashic explanation, taking בטח in the sense of confident, is: that they relied upon the strength (i.e. the merits) of the old man (Jacob) (Genesis Rabbah 80:10).

Verse 26

Verse 27

על החללים UPON THE SLAIN — to strip the slain.

Verse 28

Verse 29

חילם means THEIR WEALTH. Examples are: (Deuteronomy 8:17) "hath gotten me this (חיל) wealth"; (Numbers 19:18) "and Israel acquireth (חיל) wealth"; (Psalms 49:11) "and they leave (חילם) their wealth to others".
שבו has the meaning of taking captive (i.e. it is the Kal. perfect, 3rd pl. of the root שבה and means "they took captive"), and therefore it is accented on the last syllable (whereas שָׁבוּ, accented on the first syllable, is the same form of the verb שוב and means "they returned").

Verse 30

עכרתם YE HAVE TROUBLED ME — This has the same meaning as (Berakhot 25b) "troubled (עכורים) waters" (i.e. waters that are disturbed, not clear). He meant "Now my mind will never be clear (without worry)". There is an Agada, (Genesis Rabbah 80:12) "He said: the wine in the cask was clear but you have troubled it". The Canaanites had a tradition that they would fall by the hands of the sons of Jacob, but they thought that this would happen only when the condition was fulfilled as expressed in the verse (Exodus 23:30) "when thou shalt in-crease, then shalt thou inherit the land"; consequently they had been silent until now (i.e. they had not attacked them).
מתי מספר means A FEW MEN.

Verse 31

הכזונה implies as one unprotected.
אחותנו The Targum renders it as an accusative — ית אחתנא "our sister",) so that the meaning is: Should one (be permitted to) make our sister become as a woman who has no-one to protect her (Genesis Rabbah 80:12).

Chapter 35

Verse 1

קום עלה ARISE: GO UP [TO BETHEL] — Because you have delayed to fulfil your vow to sacrifice to me at Bethel you have been punished by this trouble of your daughter coming upon you (Genesis Rabbah 81:2).

Verse 2

הנכר [PUT AWAY] THE STRANGE [GODS] —which you have in your possession from the spoil of Shechem.
וטהרו AND PURIFY YOURSELVES of idol-worship.
והחליפו שמלותיכם AND CHANGE YOUR GARMENTS — lest you have in your possession a vestment that has been employed in idolatrous worship (Genesis Rabbah 81:3).

Verse 3

Verse 4

האלה THE TEREBINTH — a kind of tree that bears no fruit.
עם שכם means by Shechem.

Verse 5

חתת means terror.

Verse 6

Verse 7

אל בית אל EL-BETH-EL — the Holy One, blessed be He, is in Beth-El; i.e. His Divine Presence has revealed itself in Bethel. Sometimes the prefix ב "in" is omitted from a word: e.g., (2 Samuel 9:4) "Behold, he is (בית) in

the house of Muchir, the son of Ammiel", which is the same as בבית in the house of Machir; (24:13) בית אביך is the same as בבית אביך, 'in the house of thy father".
נגלו אליו האלהים GOD WAS REVEALED UNTO Him — In many passages terms denoting Divine Power and Lordship are used in the plural e. g., (39:20) "Joseph's master (אֲדֹנָיו)" (construct plural), and (Exodus 22:14) "If its owner (בעליו) be with it", where it does not say בַּעֲלוֹ (the singular form). Similarly, forms of אלהים denoting Judge or Authority are expressed in the plural, but you will find none other of the Divine Names in the plural.

Verse 8

ותמת דבורה AND DEBORAH DIED — How came Deborah to be in Jacob's house? But the explanation is: because Rebékah had promised Jacob (Gen. 27:45) "then I will send and fetch thee from thence", she sent Deborah to him to Padan-aram to tell him to leave that place, and she died on the return journey I learnt this from a comment of R. Moses Ha-darshan.
מתחת לבית אל BELOW BETHEL — The city was situated on a mountain and she was buried at the foot of the mountain.
תחת האלון UNDER THE OAK — The Targum renders it by "on the lower part of the plain" because there was some level ground above on the slope of the hill and her grave was beneath this. The plain of Bethel bore the name of Allon (cf. Rashi on Genesis 14:6). An Agada (Genesis Rabbah 81:5) states that he there received news of another mourning for he was informed that his mother had died. — In Greek allon means "another". — Because the time of her death was kept secret in order that people might not curse the mother who gave birth to Esau, Scripture also does not make open mention of her death (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 4).

Verse 9

עוד AGAIN — the second time at this spot: once when he set out on his journey, once when he returned.
ויברך אתו AND HE BLESSED HIM. — He gave him the blessing of consolation addressed to mourners (Genesis Rabbah 81:5; cp. Rashi on Genesis 25:11).

Verse 10

לא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב THY NAME SHALL NOT BE CALLED ANY MORE JACOB— which means a man who comes as a lurker and trickster, but it shall be Israel (ישראל), which signifies Prince and Chief.

Verse 11

אני אל שדי I AM GOD, ALMIGHTY, for I have the power to bless because the blessings are Mine.
פרה ורבה BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY — God said this in allusion to the fact that Benjamin was not yet born although she (Rachel) was soon to give birth to him (Genesis Rabbah 82:4).
גוי A NATION — referring to Benjamin. (Genesis Rabbah 82:4)
גוים NATIONS — referring to Manasseh and Ephraim who would come from Joseph — and these actually were counted as tribes.
ומלכים AND KINGS — referring to Saul and Ishbosheth who were of the tribe of Benjamin and these were not yet born. This verse Abner explained in this sense when he made Ishbosheth king, and the tribes of Israel also explained it thus and therefore became friendly again with the tribe of Benjamin. For so it is written (Judges 21:1) "They said there shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife". Afterwards they retracted this, saying, "If, indeed, he was not to be counted among the

tribes), the Holy One, blessed be He would not have said to Jacob in reference to Benjamin and kings shall come out of thy loins" (and since there have not yet been kings of the tribe of Benjamin that tribe must not be exterminated). Genesis Rabbah 82:4
גוי וקהל גוים "A NATION AND AN ASSEMBLAGE OF NATIONS" — this means that his sons are destined to become nations the same in number as the nations (of the ancient world) which was seventy. So, too, the whole Sanhedrin consisted of seventy. Another explanation is that it signifies that his children will sacrifice on high places at a time when this practice is forbidden, as other nations always did — this refers to the days of Elijah (Genesis Rabbah 82:5). From "This verse" is found in an old text of Rashi.)

Verse 12

Verse 13

במקום אשר דבר אתו AT THE PLACE WHERE HE SPAKE WITH HIM — I do not know what this is intended to tell us.

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

כברת הארץ A KIBRATH OF LAND — Menachem ben Seruk explains the word כברת to have the meaning of כביר "much" and that the phrase means a great distance. A Midrashic explanation is: at the time when the ground was full of holes and was riddled like a sieve (כברה) (cf. Rashi on Genesis 48:7) — when there was plenty of ploughed ground; the winter was passed, but the dry season had not yet come. This, however, cannot be the literal sense of the verse, for in the case of Naaman we find (2 Kings 5:19) "So he departed from him כברת ארץ" (which cannot possibly have this meaning). I think that it is a name for a measure of land, the distance of a Parsa or more, just as you say (Isaiah 5:10) "acres (צמדי) of vineyard" and (33:19) "the parcel (חלקת) of field": In the same way in reference to a man's journey Scripture mentions the name of a measure — viz., a כברת ארץ, a כברה of land.

Verse 17

כי גם זה FOR THIS ALSO — also means additional to you, over and above Joseph. Our Rabbis explained that with each of Jacob's sons a twin-sister was born, whilst with Benjamin an additional twin sister was born (Genesis Rabbah 82:8).

Verse 18

בן אוני means SON OF MY SORROW (Genesis Rabbah 82:9).
בנימין BENJAMIN — I am of opinion that he was so called because he alone was born in the land of Canaan which is in the South (ימין) as one comes from Aram-Naharaim, as it is said (Numbers 33:40) "in the South, in the Land of Canaan", and (12:9) "going on still towards the South". בנימין

therefore means בן ימין where ימין has the same meaning as in (Psalms 89:13) "The North and the South (ימין) Thou hast created them". For this reason the word is here written plene (with a י after the מ).
Another explanation of בנימין is that it means "son of his old days (ימים)", only that it is written with ן (instead of ם), like (Daniel 12:13) "at the end of days.

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

בשכן ישראל בארץ ההוא WHEN ISRAEL DWELT IN THAT LAND — before he came to Isaac at Hebron, all these troubles happened to him.
וישכב AND HE LAY — Because he had disturbed his couch Scripture accounts it to him as though he had actually sinned in this manner. But why did he disturb his couch? When Rachel died Jacob removed to Bilhah's tent and Reuben came and protested against the slight thus inflicted on his mother (Leah). He said: "If my mother's sister was her rival, is that any reason why the handmaid of my mother's sister should become a rival to her!" On this account he disturbed the couch (Shabbat 55b).
ויהיו בני יעקב שנים עשר NOW THE SONS OF JACOB WERE TWELVE — Scripture begins again where it left off the previous narrative (i.e. the birth of Benjamin): when Benjamin was born the destined number of his sons was complete and it was proper that they should then be enumerated; and therefore it enumerates them. Our Rabbis explained that these words are intended to tell us that Jacob's twelve sons were all equal — they were all equally righteous, for Reuben had committed no actual sin (Shabbat 55b).

Verse 23

בכור יעקב JACOB'S FIRSTBORN — even when it speaks of his corrupt action Scripture calls him firstborn (Genesis Rabbah 82:11).
בכור יעקב JACOB'S FIRSTBORN — firstborn with regard to heritage, firstborn with regard to Divine Service (for before the Levites were appointed to minister to God the duty devolved upon the oldest son in each family), firstborn in any enumeration of the twelve tribes; for the right of a firstborn son was given to Joseph only in respect of the tribes — in that he founded two tribes (just as a firstborn son received a double portion in his father's property) (Genesis Rabbah 82:11).

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

ממרא MAMRE — the name of the plain.
קרית הארבע KIRIATH-ARBA— the name of the city.
ממרא קרית הארבע therefore means "to the plain of Kiriath-arba". If you say that it should have written ממרא הקרית ארבע (that Kirjath-arba being one name the definite article should be placed in front of it) then I reply that this is the rule in Biblical Hebrew: in every case of a name compounded of two words, such as this, and such as בית לחם and אבי עזר and בית אל, when it is necessary to prefix the definite article (in order to determine the name) it is prefixed to the second element of the name — thus (1 Samuel 16:1)בית הלחמי the Bethlehemite; (Judges 6:24) "in Ophrah (אבי העזרי) of the Abiezrites"; (1 Kings 16:34) "did Hiel the Bethelite (בית האלי) build".

Verse 28

Verse 29

ויגוע יצחק AND ISAAC EXPIRED — There is no such thing as "earlier'' or "later" (chronological order) in the narratives of the Torah (Pesachim 6b), and the sale of Joseph preceded Isaac's death by twelve years. Thus: at Jacob's birth Isaac was sixty years old — as it is said (25:26) "And Isaac was sixty years old [when he bore them]" (Esau and Jacob). Isaac died when Jacob was 120, for if you deduct 60 from 180 (Isaac's age when he died), you have left 120. Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold, and that year was the one hundred and eighth of Jacob's life. How is this? Jacob was 63 when he received the blessing of his father; 14 years he hid himself in Eber's School — making 77 — and 14 years "he served for his wives" (Rashi borrows a phrase from Hosea 12:13 "And Israel served for a wife"; but he means for both wives), and at the expiration of these 14 years Joseph was born as it is said (30:25) "and it came to pass when Rachel had born Joseph" (that Jacob wished to return home and he would not have desired to do this if his fourteen years of service were not completed) making 91. Add to this the seventeen years of Joseph's life before he was sold, and you have 108. This may also be derived more directly from Scripture thus: from the time when Joseph was sold until the time when Jacob came to Egypt was 22 years, for it is said (41:46) "And Joseph was 30 years old [when he stood before Pharaoh]" (and therefore he had been in Egypt 13 years, as he was 17 when he was sold) and the seven years of plenty and two of famine had elapsed before Jacob came to Egypt (cf. 45:6), making 22 years. And as it is written (47:9) that Jacob on his arrival in Egypt said to Pharaoh "The days of the years of my sojournings are a hundred and thirty years", it follows that at the time when Joseph was sold Jacob was one hundred and eight years old.

Chapter 36

Verse 1

Verse 2

עדה בת אילון ADAH THE DAUGHTER OF ELON — She is identical with Basemath daughter of Elon (cf. 26:34) and she was called Basemath because she offered spices (בשמים) as incense to idols.
אהליבמה OHOLIBAMAH is identical with Judith. He (Esau) changed her name to Judith (Jewess), suggesting that she had abandoned idol-worship, so that he might deceive his father.
בת ענה בת צבעון THE DAUGHTER OF ANAH THE DAUGHTER OF ZIBEON — If she was the daughter of Anah she could not have been the daughter of Zibeon, for Anah was the son of Zibeon as it is said (v. 24) "And these are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah"! Scripture thus tells us that Zibeon took his daughter-in-law, Anah's wife, and of them twain Oholibamah was born (so that being a daughter of Anah's wife she is called also his daughter). This text informs you that these were all of illegitimate birth (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeshev 1).

Verse 3

בשמת בת ישמעאל BASE-MATH ISHMAEL'S DAUGHTER — But elsewhere (28:9) she is called Mahalath! We find in the Agadic Midrash on the Book of Samuel (Ch. 17) that there are three classes whose sins are pardoned: a proselyte, one who is exalted to a high position and a man on his marriage. It derives the proof for the latter case from here; viz., the reason why she was also calleth Mahalath (pardon) was because his (Esau's) sins were pardoned on his marriage to her (Megillah 17a; cf. also Genesis Rabbah 63).
אחות נביות SISTER OF NEBAIOTH — because he gave her in marriage after Ishmael's death she is called after his name (Nebaioth's sister).

Verse 4

Verse 5

ואהליבמה ילדה וגו׳ AND OHOLIBAMAH BARE etc. — This Korah was an illegitimate child for he was the son of Eliphaz (cf. vv. 15, 16, 18) who had taken his father's wife — Oholibamah, the wife of Esau — for he is enumerated also amongst the chiefs of Eliphaz at the end of this section (Genesis Rabbah 82:12).

Verse 6

i.e. no particular country, but into any country), to stay where-ever he could find room.

Verse 7

ולא יכלה ארץ מגוריהם AND THE LAND OF THEIR SOJOURNINGS COULD NOT — supply sufficient pasture for the cattle which they had. A Midrashic comment (Genesis Rabbah 82:13) on מפני יעקב אחיו [HE WENT TO A COUNTRY] ON ACCOUNT OF HIS BROTHER JACOB is: on account of the bond of indebtedness involved in the decree, (Genesis 14:13) "thy seed shall be a stranger etc… and they shall afflict them etc." that was imposed upon Isaac's descendants. He said, "I shall go hence — I desire no part either in the gift of this land which has been made to him (to my father) nor in the payment of this bond". Another reason why he went away was on account of the shame he felt at having sold his birthright (cf. Genesis Rabbah 82:13).

Verse 8

Verse 9

ואלה AND THESE — are the generations that his sons begat after he went to Seir.

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

ותמנע היתה פילגש AND TIMNA WAS CONCUBINE — This is stated to tell you in what importance Abraham was held — how eager people were to attach themselves to his descendants. This Timna was a descendant of chieftains, as it is said (v. 22) "And Lotan's sister was Timna", and Lotan was one of the chieftains inhabiting Seir — he was one of the Horites who had dwelt there from ancient times. She said to Eliphaz, "If I am unworthy to become your wife would that I might become your concubine!" In Chronicles (1 Chronicles 1:36) Scripture enumerates her amongst the children of Eliphaz, thus intimating that he took Seir's wife and from the two of them Timna was born. When she grew up she became his concubine. This is why it is stated, "and Lotan's sister was Timna", and why Scripture does not enumerate her amongst Seir's children, merely stating that she was sister to Lotan, Seir's son, (see 5:20) because she was his sister from one mother and not from one father (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeshev 1).

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

אלה אלופי בני עשו THESE WERE CHIEFTAINS OF THE SONS OF ESAU — Heads of families.

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

ישבי הארץ THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND — i.e. who had been its inhabitants before Esau came there. Our Rabbis explained (Shabbat 85b) that they are called יושבי הארץ because they were experts in making the land habitable (by skillful cultivation) saying: this entire rood of ground is suitable for planting olives, that entire rood for vines — because they tasted the soil and so discovered what was suitable for planting in it.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

ואיה וענה literally, AND AJAH AND ANAH — The ו in ואיה is redundant, so that the words are equivalent to איה וענה Ajah and Anah. There are many examples of this in Biblical Hebrew: (Daniel 8:13) "to give (וקדש וצבא) both the Sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot"; (Psalms 86:7) "they are cast into a deep sleep (ורכב וסוס) the riders also and the horses".
הוא ענה THIS WAS THAT ANAH mentioned above (Genesis 36:20) as the brother of Zibeon. Here is called his son, thus telling us that Zibeon and his own mother were the parents of Anah (Pesachim 54a).
את הימים means THE MULES — He crossed an ass and a mare, the offspring being a mule. Being himself the offspring of an unnatural union he reared such in the animal world (Pesachim 54a). Why are they called ימים (which may signify "dreaded beings")? Because the fear of them lies upon people; for R. Hanina said, "No-one has ever consulted me about an injury caused by a white mule and has recovered (וחיה literally, lived)". "But do we not see that such a person has recovered (lived)? But you should not read וחיה "and he lived", but וחיתה "and it (the wound) healed up" — for such a wound never heals up (Chullin 7b). From "But do we not see" is to be found in an old text of Rashi. It would have been unnecessary to write the genealogy of the Horites had it not been that it wishes to mention Timna, thereby showing in what importance Abraham was held, as I have explained above (Genesis 5:12).

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

ואלה המלכים וגו׳ AND THESE ARE THE KINGS etc. — There were eight and Jacob raised an equal number in whose days the kingdom of Esau temporarily ceased to exist, viz., Saul, Ishbosheth, David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Asa, Abiah and Jehoshaphat. For of the days of Yoram his (Jehoshaphat's) son it is written, (2 Kings 8:20) "In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah and made a king over themselves", whereas in the days of Jehoshaphat it is written, (1 Kings 22:48) "And there was no king in Edom: a deputy was king".

Verse 32

Verse 33

יובב בן זרח מבצרה JOBAB, THE SON OF ZERAH OF BOZRAH — Bozrah was one of the Moabite cities, as it is said (Jeremiah 48:24 which chapter is a prophecy against Moab), "[Judgment is come upon…] and upon Keriath and upon Bozrah etc." Because it produced a king for Edom it is to be smitten together with them (the Edomites), as it is said (Isaiah 34:6) "For the Lord hath a slaughtering in Bozrah, [and a great slaughter in the Land of Edom]' (Genesis Rabbah 83:3).

Verse 34

Verse 35

המכה את מדין בשדה מואב WHO SMOTE MIDIAN IN THE FIELD OF MOAB — for Midian came to war against Moab and the king of Edom went to assist Moab. From here we learn that although Midian and Moab were at strife one with the other yet in the time of Balaam they made peace in order to band themselves against Israel (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 3).

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

בת מי זהב THE DAUGHTER OF ME-ZAHAB — meaning מהו זהב what value has gold? He was so rich that gold had no value in his eyes (Genesis Rabbah 83:4).

Verse 40

ואלה שמות אלופי עשו AND THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CHIEFS OF ESAU — […AFTER THEIR PLACES ACCORDING TO THEIR NAMES] they were called by the names of their districts after Hadad died and the royal dignity had ceased so far as they were concerned. The former names mentioned above (v. 15ff.), are the names given them at their birth. This, too, (the first statement made here) is expressly set forth in Chronicles (2:51) "And Hadad (Hadar) died, and the chiefs of Edom were: the chief of Timna etc." (We must therefore translate here: "the chieftain of Timna etc.")

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

מגדיאל MAGDIEL — This is Rome (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 38).

Chapter 37

Verse 1

וישב יעקב AND JACOB ABODE — After it (Scripture) has described to you the settlements of Esau and his descendants in a brief manner — since they were not distinguished and important enough that it should be related in detail how they settled down and that there should be given an account of their wars and how they drove out the Horites (see Deuteronomy 2:12) — it explains clearly and at length the settlements made by Jacob and his descendants and all the events which brought these about, because these are regarded by the Omnipresent as of sufficient importance to speak of them at length. Thus, too, you will find that in the case of the ten generations from Adam to Noah it states "So-and-so begat so-and-so", but when it reaches Noah it deals with him at length. Similarly, of the ten generations from Noah to Abraham it gives but a brief account, but when it comes to Abraham it speaks of him more fully. It may be compared to the case of a jewel that falls into the sand: a man searches in the sand, sifts it in a sieve until he finds the jewel. When he has found it he throws away the pebbles and keeps the jewel (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeshev 1). Another explanation of וישב יעקב AND JACOB ABODE: The camels of a flax dealer once came into a city laden with flax. A blacksmith asked in wonder where all that flax could be stored, and a clever fellow answered him, "A single spark caused by your bellows can burn up all of it." "So, too, when Jacob saw (heard of) all these chiefs whose names are written above he said wonderingly, "Who can conquer all these?" What is written after the names of these chieftains? — and in this may be found the reply to Jacob's question: These are the generations of Jacob — Joseph. For it

is written (Obadiah 1:18) "And the house of Jacob shall be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau, for stubble: one spark issuing from Joseph will burn up all of these (descendants of Esau) (Genesis Rabbah 84:5). The passage beginning "Another explanation" is found in an old Rashi text.

Verse 2

אלה תלדות יעקב THESE ARE THE PROGENY OF JACOB — And these are an account of the generations of Jacob: these are their settlements and the events that happened to them until they formed a permanent settlement. The first cause is found in the narrative, "Joseph being seventeen years old, etc. etc." — it was through this incident that it came about that they went down to Egypt. This is the real explanation of the text and in it each statement finds its proper setting. The Midrash, however, explains that by the words, "These are the progeny of Jacob — Joseph", Scripture regards all Jacob's sons as secondary to Joseph for several reasons: first, the whole purpose of Jacob in working for Laban was only for Rachel, Joseph's mother, (and all his children were born only in consequence of this); then, again, Joseph's facial features bore a striking resemblance to those of Jacob. Further, whatever happened to Jacob happened to Joseph: the one was hated, the other was hated; in the case of the one his brother wished to kill him so, too, in the case of the other, his brethren wished to kill him. Many such similarities are pointed out in (Genesis Rabbah 84:5-6; Genesis Rabbah 84:8). Another comment on this verse is: וישב AND HE ABODE — Jacob wished to live at ease, but this trouble in connection with Joseph suddenly came upon him. When the righteous wish to live at ease, the Holy one, blessed be He), says to them: "Are not the righteous satisfied with what is stored up for them in the world to come that they wish to live at ease in this world too! (Genesis Rabbah 84:3)
והוא נער AND HE, BEING A LAD — His actions were childish: he dressed his hair, he touched up his eyes so that he should appear good-looking (Genesis Rabbah 84:7).
את בני בלהה WITH THE SONS OF BILHAH — meaning that he made it his custom to associate with the sons of Bilhah because his brothers slighted them as being sons of a hand-maid; therefore he fraternised with them.
את דבתם רעה THEIR EVIL REPORT — Whatever he saw wrong in his brothers, the sons of Leah, he reported to his father: that they used to eat flesh cut off from a living animal, that they treated the sons of the handmaids with contempt, calling them slaves, and that they were suspected of living in an immoral manner. With three such similar matters he was therefore punished. In consequence of his having stated that they used to eat flesh cut off from a living animal Scripture states, (Genesis 37:31) "And they slew a he-goat" after they had sold him and they did not eat its flesh whilst the animal was still living. And because of the slander which he related about them that they called their brothers slaves — (Psalms 105:17) "Joseph was sold for a slave." And because he charged them with immorality (Genesis 39:7) "his master's wife cast her eyes upon him etc." (Genesis Rabbah 84:7).
דבתם THEIR REPORT — The word דבה always means in old French parleriz; English, gossip: whatever he could speak bad about them he told to his father.
דבה has the same meaning as the verb of the same root in (Song 7:10) "(דובב) making speak the lips of those that are asleep".

Verse 3

בן זקנים THE SON OF HIS OLD AGE — because he was a wise son to him" — all that he had learnt from Shem and Eber he taught him (Genesis Rabbah

84:8). Another explanation of בן זקנים— his facial features were similar to his (Jacob's) (Genesis Rabbah 84:8).
פסים is a term for raiment of fine wool (Shabbat 10b). Similar is (Ester 1:6) כרפס "Fine linen and blue". The same garment כתנת הפסים is mentioned (2 Samuel 13:18) in the story of Amnon and Tamar and we may therefore gather that it was made of very fine material. There is a Midrashic statement that in the word פסים we may find an allusion to all his misfortunes: he was sold to Potiphar (פוטיפר), to the merchants (סוחרים), to the Ishmaelites (ישמעאלים), and to the Midianites (מדינים) (Genesis Rabbah 84:8).

Verse 4

ולא יכלו דברו לשלום AND THEY COULD NOT SPEAK PEACEABLY TO HIM — from what is stated to their discredit we may infer something to their credit: they did not speak one thing with their mouth having another thing quite different in their hearts (Genesis Rabbah 84:9).
דברו means TO SPEAK TO HIM.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

מאלמים אלמים — Understand it as the Targum renders it: were binding bundles i.e. sheaves. Similar is (Psalms 126:6) "bearing (אלומותיו) its sheaves". Similarly in Mishnaic Hebrew we have (Bava Metzia 22b) "and he takes (האלומות) the sheaves and makes public proclamation".
קמה אלמתי means it raised itself erect.
וגם נצבה means remaining erect in its place.

Verse 8

ועל דבריו AND FOR HIS WORDS — for the evil report about them which he used to bring to their father.

Verse 9

Verse 10

ויספר אל אביו ואל אחיו AND HE TOLD IT TO HIS FATHER AND TO HIS BRETHREN — After he had related it to his brothers (see 5:9) he again related it to his father in their presence.
ויגער בו AND HIS FATHER REBUKED HIM because he was arousing hatred against himself by relating the dream.
הבוא נבוא SHALL WE INDEED COME — "Is not your mother long since dead?" He did not, however, understand that the statement really alluded to Bilhah who had brought him up as though she were his own mother (Genesis Rabbah 84:11). Our Rabbis inferred from here that there is no dream but has some absurd incidents (Berakhot 55). Jacob's intention in pointing out the absurdity of Joseph's mother, who was dead, bowing down to him was to make his sons forget the whole matter so that they should not envy him, and on this account he said to him, "Shall we indeed come etc." —

meaning, just as it (the fulfillment of the dream) is impossible in the case of your mother so the remainder of the dream is absurd.

Verse 11

שמר את הדבר OBSERVED THE MATTER — He awaited and looked forward to the time when this would come to pass. In the same sense we have (Isaiah 26:2) "that watch (שומר) for faithfulness" (i.e., for the performance of a promise) and (Job 14:16) — "לא תשמור for my sin" — which means "thou dost not wait for my sin".

Verse 12

לרעות את צאן TO FEED THE FLOCK — The word את has dots above it, to denote that they went only to feed themselves (Genesis Rabbah 84:13).

Verse 13

הנני HERE AM I — An expression denoting humility and readiness: he was zealous to perform his father's bidding, although he was aware that his brothers hated him (Genesis Rabbah 84:13).

Verse 14

מעמק חברון FROM THE VALE OF HEBRON — But was not Hebron situated on a hill, as it is said (Numbers 13:22) "And they went up into the South and they came unto Hebron" why then does it state that Jacob sent him from the עמק, (the vale, the deep part) of Hebron? But the meaning is that Jacob sent him in consequence of the necessity of bringing into operation the profound (עמוקה) thought of the righteous man who was buried in Hebron (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 22) — in order that there might be fulfilled that which was spoken to Abraham when the Covenant was made 'between the parts" (cf. 15:13), "thy seed shall be a stranger etc."
ויבא שכמה AND HE CAME TO SHECHEM — A spot foredestined to be the scene of misfortunes: there the sons of Jacob sinned (by selling Joseph), there Dinah was maltreated, there the kingdom of the House of David was divided, as it said (1 Kings 12:1) "And Rehoboam went to Shechem etc." (Sanhedrin 102a).

Verse 15

וימצאהו איש AND A MAN FOUND HIM — This was the angel Gabriel (Genesis Rabbah 84:14) as it is said, (Daniel 9:21) and the man (והאיש) Gabriel" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeshev 2:3).

Verse 16

Verse 17

נסעו מזה THEY HAVE JOURNEYED HENCE — they have departed from all feeling of brotherhood.
נלכה דתינה LET US GO TO DOTHAN — "let us go to seek some legal (דתות) pretexts" to put you to death. According to the literal sense, however, it is the name of place, and Scripture never really loses its literal sense (Shabbat 63a).

Verse 18

ויתנכלו AND THEY CONSPIRED — The Hithpael form denotes that they became filled with plots and craft.
אתו is here the same as אִתּוֹ which means "with him" — meaning אליו: they became filled with plots and craft directed towards him (אליו).

Verse 19

Verse 20

ונראה מה יהיו חלמתיו AND WE SHALL SEE WHAT WILL BECOME OF HIS DREAMS — R. Isaac said, this verse calls for a homiletic explanation. The Holy Spirit said this latter part of the text. They say "let us slay him", and Scripture (i.e. the Holy Spirit) breaks in upon their words concluding them by saying, "and we shall see what will become of his dreams": we shall see whose words will be fulfilled — yours or mine. For it is impossible that they should have said, "and we shall see what will become of his dreams", for as soon as they would kill him his dreams would be of no effect (Tanchuma Yashan 1:9:13).

Verse 21

לא נכנו נפש — supply the word מכת so that the meaning will be "Let us not smite him with a smiting of his life" — it means killing.

Verse 22

למען הציל אתו THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER HIM [OUT OF THEIR HAND] — The Holy Spirit (Scripture) bears witness for Reuben that he said this only for the purpose of saving his brother — that he would come afterwards and draw him up from there. He thought, "I am the first-born and the chief among them, and blame will attach to no one but myself" (Genesis Rabbah 84:15).

Verse 23

את כתנתו HIS GARMENT — this means his shirt.
את כתנת הפסים THE LONG SLEEVED GARMENT — this was the garment that his father had given him additional to those of his brothers (Genesis Rabbah 84:16).

Verse 24

והבור רק אין בו מים AND THE PIT WAS EMPTY, THERE WAS NO WATER IN IT — Since it states, "the pit was empty", do I not know that "there was no water in it"? What then is the force of "there was no water in it"? Water, indeed it did not contain, but there were serpents and scorpions in it (Shabbat 22a).

Verse 25

ארחת means what the Targum says — A CARAVAN; this is called ארחת with reference to the travelers on the road (ארח) who compose it.
וגמליהם נשאים AND THEIR CAMELS WERE BEARING etc. — Why does Scripture specially announce what they were laden with? It is to tell you how great is the reward of the righteous: it is not usual for Arabs to carry anything but naphta and itran (tar) which are evil-smelling, but for this one (Joseph, the righteous) it was specially arranged that they should be

carrying fragrant spices so that he should not suffer from a bad odour (Genesis Rabbah 84:17).
נכאת SPICERY — Every collection of many kinds of spices is called נכאת. So, too, (2 Kings 20:13) "and he showed them all the house of his נכתה which means the house where his spices were mixed. Onkelos translates it as meaning wax (perhaps an aromatic gum).
צרי AND BALM — a resin that exudes from the wood of the balsam-tree: it is the נטף that is enumerated among the ingredients of the incense used in the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:34; cf. Keritot 6a).
ולט AND LADANUM — This is called Lotos in the language of the Mishna. Our Rabbis have in treatise Niddah 8a explained that it is a vegetable root; it bears the name aristolochia (birthwort).

Verse 26

מה בצע means WHAT PROFIT— just as the Targum renders it.
וכסינו את דמו AND CONCEAL HIS BLOOD — this signifies and we hide the fact of his death (for they had not shed his blood, but had cast him into a pit to die).

Verse 27

וישמעו AND THEY HEARKENED — The Targum renders this by "and they accepted it from him" (i.e., they agreed with him). Wherever the verb שמע means agreeing with a person's statement — obeying — as here, and as (28:7) "and Jacob had hearkened (וישמע) to his father", and (Exodus 24:7) "We will do and we will obey (ונשמע)" it is translated in the Targum by קבל "accepting", but wherever it merely means hearing with the ear, as e. g. (3:8) "And they heard (וישמעו) the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden", and (27:5) "and Rebecca heard (שומעת;", and (31:1) "And Israel heard (וישמע)", and (Exodus 16:12) "I have heard (שמעתי) the murmurings of the children of Israel", — all such cases are rendered by various forms of שמע: ושמעו "and they heard", ושמעת "and she heard", ושמע "and he heard",שמיע,קדמי "there is heard before Me" (I have heard).

Verse 28

וישברו אנשים מדינים AND THERE PASSED BY MIDIANITES — This was another caravan: Scripture indicates that he was sold several times.
וימשכו AND THEY DREW UP — the sons of Jacob drew up את יוסף מן הבור JOSEPH FROM THE PIT, and they sold him to the Ishmaelites, and the Ishmaelites to the Midianites and the Midianites into Egypt (Midrash Tanchuma 1:9:13).

Verse 29

וישב ראובן AND REUBEN RETURNED — When he (Joseph) was sold he had not been present, for it was his day (his turn) to go to attend to his father (Genesis Rabbah 84:19). Another explanation is: he had not sat with them at the meal because he was occupied with his sack-cloth and fast in penitence for having disturbed his father's couch (Genesis Rabbah 84:19).

Verse 30

אנה אני בא WHITHER SHALL I GO? — Whither can I flee from my father's grief?

Verse 31

שעיר עזים A KID OF THE GOATS — its blood resembles that of a human being (Genesis Rabbah 84:19).
הַכֻּתֹּנֶת THE COAT — This is the form of the noun in the absolute state, but when it is in the construct state — as e.g., Joseph's coat", "the coat of many colours", "the coat of linen", — it is punctuated as כְּתֹנֶת.

Verse 32

Verse 33

ויאמר כתנת בני AND HE SAID, MY SON'S COAT —is this (i.e. supply the words היא זו after בני).
חיה רעה אכלתהו AN EVIL BEAST HATH EATEN HIM — The spirit of prophecy was enkindled within him, for these words may be taken to mean that at some future time Potiphar's wife would attack him (Genesis Rabbah 84:19). Why did not the Holy One, blessed be He, make known to him (Jacob) that he was still living? Because they had placed under a ban and a curse anyone of them who would make it known, and they made the Holy One, blessed be He, a party with them to this agreement (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeshev 2) Isaac, however, knew that he was living, but he thought, "How dare I reveal it since the Holy One, blessed be He does not wish to reveal it" (Genesis Rabbah 84:21).

Verse 34

ימים רבים MANY DAYS — twenty-two years (Genesis Rabbah 84:20) — from the time he left him until Jacob went down to Egypt. For it is said, (v. 2) "Joseph was seventeen years old" (when all these events happened), and he was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh; seven years of plenty and two years of famine had passed by the time Jacob came to Egypt — making in all 22 years. These correspond to the 22 years during which Jacob had not practised the duty of honouring his parents (that is, the period during which he did not reside with them and attend to their needs) (Megillah 17a): viz., the twenty years he stayed in Laban's house and the two years on the journey when he was returning from Laban's house — one and a half year at Succoth and six months at Bethel. This is what he meant when he said to Laban (31:41) "These twenty years that I have been in thy house are לי" — they are for me — the responsibility for them lies upon me (לי being taken as עלי) and at sometimes I shall be punished for a period equal to them.

Verse 35

וכל בנתיו AND ALL HIS DAUGHTERS — R Judah said: a twin-sister was born with each of Jacob's sons and they each took a step-sister to wife (It was these daughters who comforted Jacob) R. Nehemiah said: their wives were Canaanite women and not their step-sisters; what is meant then "by all his daughters"? His daughters-in-law, for a person does not hesitate to call his son-in-law his son and his daughter-in-law his daughter (Genesis Rabbah 84:21).
וימאן להתנחם BUT HE REFUSED TO COMFORT HIMSELF — A person does not accept consolation for one living whom he believes to be dead, for with regard to the dead it is decreed that he be forgotten from the heart, but it is not so decreed with regard to the living (Genesis Rabbah 84:20).
ארד אל בני I WILL GO DOWN TO MY SON — This has the same meaning as על בני, on account of my son. There are many examples where אל is used in the sense of על: (2 Samuel 4:21) "(אל) because of Saul (ואל) and because of his bloody house"; (1 Samuel 4:21) "(אל) because the ark of God was

taken (ואל) and because of the death of her father-in-law and her husband".
אבל שאלה MOURNING INTO THE GRAVE — According to the literal meaning שאל means "the grave" — whilst I am still in a state of mourning I shall be interred (i.e. even to the day of my burial I shall mourn) and I shall not be comforted all my life. The Midrash explains it to refer to Gehinnom. "This omen has been given me by God: if none of my sons die during my lifetime I may be assured that I shall not see Gehinnom" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayigash 9).
ויבך אתו אביו .(וישם THUS HIS FATHER WEPT FOR HIM — His father refers to Isaac: he wept for Jacob's trouble, but he did not mourn for he knew that he (Joseph) was alive (Genesis Rabbah 84:21).

Verse 36

הטבחים— means the slaughterers of the kings animals.

Chapter 38

Verse 1

ויהי בעת ההוא AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THAT TIME — Why is this section placed here thus interrupting the section dealing with the history of Joseph? To teach that his brothers degraded him from his high position. When they saw their father's grief they said, "You told us to sell him: if you had told us to send him back to his father we would also have obeyed you" (Genesis Rabbah 85:2).
ויט AND HE TURNED away from his brothers.
עד איש עדלמי UNTO A CERTAIN ADULLAMITE — he entered into a business-partnership with him.

Verse 2

כנעני means A MERCHANT — (cf. Pesachim 50a and Zachariah 14:21).

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

והיה בכזיב AND HE WAS AT CHEZIB — the name of a place. I am of opinion that it was called Chezib because there she ceased bearing. This meaning of the word occurs in (Jeremiah 15:18) "wilt thou indeed be unto me as an (אכזב) a deceiver (one who ceases to keep faith)", and (Isaiah 58:11) "whose waters do not (יכזבו) fail (cease)". For if this be not so (that it was called Chezib for the reason stated) what is it intended to tell us (what reason is there for telling us where he was at that time)? In Genesis Rabbah (Genesis Rabbah 55:4) I found the following ותקרא את שמו שלה וגו AND SHE CALLED HIS NAME SHELAH [AND HE WAS AT CHEZIB] etc. — פסקת "ceasing".

Verse 6

Verse 7

רע בעיני ה' WAS WICKED IN THE EYES OF THE LORD — like the wickedness of Onan, and committing the same sin. This must have been the case because of Onan it is said, (v. 10) "And the Lord slew him also — Onan's death was for a similar reason as Er's death. Why did Er commit this sin? So that she should not bear children and her beauty thereby become impaired (Yevamot 34b).

Verse 8

והקם זרע AND RAISE SEED — The son will be called by the name of him who is dead.

Verse 9

ושחת ארצה AND HE DESTROYED ONTO THE GROUND — He 'threshed inside and winnowed outside' (Genesis Rabbah 85:5).

Verse 10

Verse 11

כי אמר וגו' FOR HE SAID etc. — that is to say, he pushed her off with a straw (i.e., he put her off with a lame excuse) because he never intended to give her to him in marriage
כי אמר פן ימות FOR HE SAID LEST PERADVENTURE HE DIE — She is a woman of whom it may be presumed that the men she marries will always die young (Genesis Rabbah 85:5).

Verse 12

ויעל על גזזי צאנו AND HE WENT UP UNTO HIS SHEEP-SHEARERS — it means: and he went up to Timnah to stand by his sheep-shearers.

Verse 13

עלה תמנתה HE GOETH UP TO TIMNAH — In the case of Samson it is said (Judges 14:1) "And Samson went down to Timnah". But it lay on the slope of a mountain: from one direction one had to go up to it, from the other one went down to it (Sotah 10a).

Verse 14

ותתעלף AND SHE WRAPPED HERSELF — she veiled her face that he should not recognise her.
ותשב בפתח עינים AND SHE SAT AT THE ENTRANCE OF ENAYIM (literally, at the opening of the eyes) — at the place where the eyes become opened:) at the cross-road which is on the way leading to Timnah. Our Rabbis explain (Sotah 10b) that it means at the door (פתח) of our father Abraham's residence to which all eyes (עינים)) looked forward to pay a visit.
כי ראתה כי גדל שלה FOR SHE SAW THAT SHELAH WAS GROWN etc. — This was the reason why she offered herself to Judah, for she was anxious to have children from him (as an ancestor in some way or other) (Horayot 10b).

Verse 15

וישבה לזונה AND HE THOUGHT HER TO BE AN HARLOT, because she was sitting at the cross-roads.
כי כסתה פניה FOR SHE HAD COVERED HER FACE — so that he could not see her face and thus recognize her. A Midrashic explanation of our Rabbis is that כי כסתה פניה means BECAUSE SHE ALWAYS COVERED HER FACE: when she had stayed in her father-in-law's house she had shown herself a modest woman, and therefore he did not suspect her (of being the woman who was sitting there for that evil purpose) (Sotah 10b).

Verse 16

ויט אליה אל הדרך AND HE TURNED UNTO HER BY THE WAY — from the road he was following he turned to the road where she was. In old French détourner; English to turn aside.
הבה נא COME, I PRAY THEE — Prepare yourself and your mind for this. Wherever הבה occurs it signifies "preparing oneself", except in any passage where it must necessarily be translated by "giving". And, indeed, those signifying "preparation" have almost the meaning of "giving".
(17) ערבון— means a PLEDGE.

Verse 17

ערבון means a PLEDGE.

Verse 18

חתמך ופתילך THY SIGNET AND THY STRING — The Targum renders it by "Thy signet and thy cloak" — the ring which you use as a seal and the cloak with which you cover yourself
ותהר לו AND SHE CONCEIVED BY HIM (לו, to him) — she conceived men who were strong, similar to himself, and men who were righteous, similar to himself (Genesis Rabbah 85:9).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

הקדשה— means a woman who is devoted to, (מקדשת) and who is ever ready for illicit intercourse.

Verse 22

Verse 23

תקח לה Let that remain hers which she has in her possession (i.e. LET HER KEEP IT).
פן נהיה לבוז LEST WE BECOME A SCORN — if you seek her further the matter will become public and disgrace will follow, for what more can I do to redeem my promise? (for I have sent this kid etc and I can do no more).
הנה שלחתי את הגדי הזה BEHOLD, I SENT THIS KID — Because Judah had deceived his father through a kid of the goats — for he had dipped

Joseph's coat in its blood — therefore he, too, was deceived through a kid of the goats (Genesis Rabbah 85:9).

Verse 24

כמשלש חדשים ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER — the greater part of the first, the greater part of the third and the entire middle (second) one (Genesis Rabbah 85:10). The expression כמשלש חדשים signifies "when the months repeated themselves three times". The word משלש is similar in form to (Ester 9:19) "and sending (ומשלח) portions"; (Isaiah 11:14), "sending (משלח) forth their hand". Onkelos renders it similarly כתלתות ירחיא (where תלתות is the infinitive of תְּלַת "when the months become three").
הרה לזנונים SHE IS WITH CHILD BY HARLOTRY — The word הרה is an adjective, meaning pregnant, like (Exodus 21:22) "a pregnant (הרה) woman" (where הרה can be only an adjective) and as (Song. 7:10) "Clear (ברה) as the sun" (where ברה is an adjective; Rashi perhaps quotes this example to prove also that הרה is from root הרר just as ברה is from ברר)
ותשרף AND LET HER BE BURNT — Ephraim the Disputant said in the name of Rabbi Meir: She was the daughter of Shem who was a priest (see Rashi on Genesis 14:18) on this account they sentenced her to be burnt (cf. Leviticus 21:9) (Genesis Rabbah 85:10).

Verse 25

הוא מוצאת WHEN SHE WAS BROUGHT FORTH to be burnt.
והיא שלחה אל חמיה SHE SENT TO HER FATHER-IN-LAW — she did not wish to put him to shame in public by saying "It is by thee that I am with child", but she said only "By the man whose these are". She thought: "if he is to acknowledge it, let him acknowledge it voluntarily, and if not, let them burn me and let me not put him to shame in public". From this passage our Rabbis derived the teaching: Far better that a man should let himself be cast into a fiery furnace (even as Tamar was ready to be burnt to death) and let him not publicly put his fellow to shame (Sotah 10b).
הכר נא RECOGNISE, I PRAY THEE — The word נא is used as an expression of entreaty: Acknowledge (הכר) I beg of you, your Creator and do not destroy three lives (Genesis Rabbah 85:11).

Verse 26

צדקה SHE IS RIGHTEOUS (right) in what she has said
ממני FROM ME is she with child. Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, explained this to mean that a Bath-kol came forth and said the word ממני — from Me and by My agency have these things happened: because she proved herself a modest woman whilst in her father-in-law's house I have ordained that kings shall be descended from her, and I have already ordained that I would raise up kings in Israel from the tribe of Judah (Genesis Rabbah 85:11) (therefore I have brought it about that these two persons who are to be the ancestors of kings should unite to become so).
כי על כן לא נתתיה BECAUSE THAT I GAVE HER NOT — For (כי) she has acted rightly, because (על כן) I did not give her to Shelah, my son.
ולא יסף עוד AND HE KNEW HER AGAIN NO MORE — Some explain that ולא יסף means he did not continue to know her (Sifrei Bamidbar 88): others explain that it means he did not cease to know her (Sotah 10b). An exactly similar instance occurs in reference to Eldad and Medad (Numbers 11:25), where ולא יספו which some translate "and they did not continue to prophesy" is translated in the Targum by "and they did not cease to prophesy".

Verse 27

בעת לדתה AT THE TIME OF HER BEARING — But in the case of Rebecca Scripture says (25:24) "And when her days to give birth were fulfilled" — in the latter case the months of pregnancy were complete, here, however, they were short of the full term (Genesis Rabbah 85:13).
והנה תאומים AND BEHOLD TWINS — Here the word is written plene (with א and י whilst there (in the case of Rebecca) it is written defective (תומם without these letters) because one (viz., Esau) was wicked, but here both were righteous (Genesis Rabbah 85:13).

Verse 28

ויתן יד THE ONE PUT OUT HIS HAND — one stretched forth his hand outside, and after she had bound the scarlet thread upon his hand he drew it back.

Verse 29

פרצת THOU HAST BURST FORTH — What a strong effort hast thou made!

Verse 30

אשר על ידו השני THAT HAD THE SHINING RED THREAD UPON HIS HAND — The word יד is written here four times corresponding to the four acts of sacrilege which Achan, who was a descendant of Zarah, committed with his hand. Others say these correspond to the four things which he took with his hand of the spoil of Jericho: a Babylon garment, two hundred shekels, and a wedge of gold (Genesis Rabbah 85:14).
ויקרא שמו זרח AND HIS NAME WAS CALLED ZARAH — (bright, shining), because of the bright colour of the scarlet thread.

Chapter 39

Verse 1

ויוסף הורד AND JOSEPH WAS BROUGHT DOWN — It (Scripture) now reverts to the original subject (and consequently it states ויוסף הורד "Joseph had been brought down to Egypt" before the events last mentioned); it interrupted it only in order to connect the account of the degradation of Judah (Genesis 38:1) with that of the sale of Joseph, thus suggesting that it was on account of him (i.e. Joseph — Judah's part in the sale of Joseph —) that they (his brothers) degraded him from his high position. A further reason why this narrative of Judah and Tamar is interpolated here is to place in juxtaposition the story of Potiphar's wife and the story of Tamar, suggesting that just as this woman (Tamar) acted out of pure motives so also the other (Potiphar's wife) acted out of pure motives, for she foresaw by her astrological speculations that she was destined to be the ancestress of children by him (Joseph) — but she did not know whether these children were to be hers or her daughter's (Genesis Rabbah 85:2).

Verse 2

Verse 3

כי ה' אתו THAT THE LORD WAS WITH HIM — the name of God was a familiar word in his mouth (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeshev 8).

Verse 4

וכל יש לו AND ALL THAT HE HAD — This is an elliptical phrase — the word אשר is omitted after.

Verse 5

Verse 6

AND HE KNEW NOT AUGHT HE HAD — he paid no attention to anything.
כי אם הלחם SAVE THE BREAD — this means his wife, but Scripture uses here a euphemism (Genesis Rabbah 86:6) (cf. Joseph's own words in Genesis 39:9).
ויהי יוסף יפה תאר AND JOSEPH WAS OF BEAUTIFUL FORM — As soon as he saw that he was ruler (in the house) he began to eat and drink and curl his hair. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "Your father is mourning and you curl your hair! I will let a bear loose against you" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeshev 8). Immediately.

Verse 7

ותשא אשת אדניו HIS LORD'S WIFE LIFTED UP HER EYES etc. — wherever אחר is used and not אחרי it means immediately after (Genesis Rabbah 44:5).

Verse 8

Verse 9

וחטאתי לאלהים AND SIN AGAINST GOD — The "Sons of Noah" (בני נח) were subject to the command which forbade immorality (Sanhedrin 56b).

Verse 10

לשכב אצלה TO LIE BY HER — even without sinning (Genesis Rabbah 87:6).
להיות עמה TO BE WITH HER, in the world to come (Gehinnom) (Genesis Rabbah 87:6).

Verse 11

ויהי כהיום הזה AND IT CAME TO PASS ON A CERTAIN DAY — This means as much as "and it came to pass when a certain distinguished day arrived" — a day of merriment, a day of their sacred feast when they all went to the temple of their idols, — she said), "I shall find no day fitting to associate with Joseph as this day". She therefore told her attendants I am sick and cannot go to the temple (Sotah 36b).
לעשות מלאכתו TO DO HIS WORK — Rab and Samuel differ as to what this means. One holds that it means, his actual house-work; the other that it means to associate with her, but a vision of his father's face appeared to him and he resisted temptation and did not sin as is stated in Treatise Sotah 36b.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

ראו הביא לנו SEE, HE HATH BROUGHT IN UNTO US — This is an elliptical phrase: "he hath brought in to us" without stating plainly who brought him in She was referring to her husband.
עברי A HEBREW — is one who came from the other side (עבר) of the river Euphrates, being at the same time of the sons of Eber (אדניו).

Verse 15

Verse 16

אדניו HIS MASTER — Joseph's master (not the master or owner of the garment).

Verse 17

בא אלי —The sentence means: the Hebrew servant whom thou hast brought unto us came to me to have his sport with me.

Verse 18

Verse 19

ויהי כשמע אדניו AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN HIS LORD HEARD etc. — She said this when he was alone with her, caressing her. This is what she meant by כדברים האלה "things like these did thy servant do to me" — caresses such as these.

Verse 20

Verse 21

ויט אליו חסד AND CAUSED HIM TO FIND FAVOUR — so that he was liked by all who saw him. We have the expression חסד in a like sense in the Mishna (Baraitha): "a handsome bride liked by all (חסודה)" (Ketubot 17a).

Verse 22

הוא היה עושה HE WAS THE DOER OF IT — understand this as the Targum does: it was done at his command.

Verse 23

באשר ה' אתו — means BECAUSE THE LORD WAS WITH HIM (i.e. באשר means because).

Chapter 40

Verse 1

אחר הדברים האלה AFTER THESE THINGS — Because this malignant woman made the righteous man (Joseph) a familiar topic of conversation with every one so that he was spoken about discreditably the Holy One, blessed be He, brought about the offences of these men in order that people should turn their attention to them and not to him (Genesis Rabbah 88:1), and also in order that relief should come to the righteous man by their agency (Genesis Rabbah 88:3).
חטאו HAD SINNED — in the case of the one, a fly was found in the goblet of aromatic wine, in the case of the other, a pebble was found in the loaves he baked (Genesis Rabbah 88:2).
והאפה AND THE BAKER of the king's bread. The root (אפה) is only used of baking bread. old French pistor; English, kneader.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

ויפקד שר הטבחים את יוסף AND THE OFFICER OF THE EXECUTIONERS APPOINTED JOSEPH — to be WITH THEM (i.e. supply the word להיות to complete the sense).
ויהיו ימים במשמר AND THEY WERE A YEAR IN WARD — ימים means twelve months (cf. Rashi on Genesis 24:55).

Verse 5

ויחלמו חלום שניהם means AND BOTH OF THEM DREAMED A DREAM — This is the real meaning (that שניהם is the subject of ויחלמו and is not to be connected with חלום). A Midrashic explanation is, taking חלום as construct case: each dreamed the dream of both of them — i.e. he dreamed his own dream and the interpretation of the other's dream. This is what it means when it states (v. 16) "And the chief baker saw that he had interpreted well"). (Genesis Rabbah 88:4; Berakhot 55a).
איש כפתרון חלמו EACH MAN ACCORDING TO THE INTERPRETATION OF HIS DREAM — each dreamed a dream consistent with the interpretation which foretold the future that was to befall them.

Verse 6

זעפים means SAD. Similar are (1 Kings 20:43) "sullen and displeased (וזעף)"; (Micah 7:9) "I will bear the displeasure (זעף) of the Lord (the sadness which the Lord has imposed on me).'

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

שריגם BRANCHES — long branches called in old French. vitis.
והיא כפרחת means AND IT WAS AS THOUGH IT BUDDED — it seemed to me in my dream as though it budded, and after the bud its blossom sprang up — i.e. it began to flower; old French spanier — and after that the clusters brought forth ripe grapes. The Targum has והיא כד אפרחת אפיקת לבלבין "and it, when it budded, brought forth blossoms", These words (ע"כ, abbreviation for עד כאן "till here". The abbreviation is employed to show where a quotation ends.) are the translation of the word פרחת"" only. A נץ is larger than a פרח (i.e. נץ is a later stage of the bud), as it is written (Isaiah 18:5) "and the blossom (נצה) becometh a ripening grape", and it is written (Numbers 17:23) "And it brought forth buds (פרח)" and afterwards it states "it brought forth (ציץ) blossoms".

Verse 11

ואשחט translate it as the Targum AND I PRESSED — The word occurs frequently in the Mishna (but only here in the Bible).

Verse 12

שלשת ימים ARE THREE DAYS — They are a symbol to you of three days. There are many Midrashic explanations of these words (cf. Chullin 92a).

Verse 13

ישא פרעה את ראשך PHARAOH SHALL LIFT UP THY HEAD — The words נשא ראש denote to count (cf. Exodus 30:12). When he musters his other servants to wait upon him during the meal he will count you also among them.
כנך means THY POST and thy place.

Verse 14

כי אם זכרתני אתך means: You will be restored to your post and will have great influence (cf. Nehemia's position as cupbearer at the Persian court), so that. (כי) if (אם) thou at all bear me in mind after it is well with thee as I have interpreted.
ועשית נא עמדי חסד THEN SHOW KINDNESS I PRAY THEE UNTO ME — The word נא is an expression of entreaty.

Verse 15

Verse 16

In our country there are many such baskets and sellers of fancy rolls — old French oublies — usually put them in these baskets.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

יום הלדת את פרעה HIS (PHARAOH'S) BIRTHDAY. It is called (Avodah Zarah 10a) "The birthday festival". The causative passive form (הלדת) is used because the infant is born only by the assistance of others, for the midwife delivers the woman. On this account a midwife is called מילדת a Piel form "one who brings to birth". This passive form occurs similarly (Ezekiel 16:4) "And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born (הולדת אתך)". A similar passive form is used in (Leviticus 13:55) "after the plague (הכבס) is washed away", because the washing is done by others).
וישא את ראש וגו' means he counted them amongst his other servants — because he counted those who might serve him at his feast — and he remembered these amongst them. The phrase is similar to (Numbers 1.2) "שא את ראש" which signifies counting.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

ולא זכר שר המשקים AND THE CHIEF OF THE BUTLERS DID NOT REMEMBER HIM on that day,
וישכחהו AND HE FORGOT HIM afterwards. Because Joseph had placed his trust in him that he should remember him he was doomed to remain in prison for two years. So it is said (Psalms 40:5) "Happy is the man who maketh the Lord his trust and turneth not to (רהבים) the arrogant" — i.e. doth not trust in the Egyptians who are called arrogant (Genesis Rabbah 89:3 cf. Isaiah 30:7).

Chapter 41

Verse 1

ויהי מקץ AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END — As the Targum renders it by מסוף "at the end" All forms of the noun קץ signify one end or the other.
על היאר BY THE RIVER — No other river is called יאר) except the Nile, because the whole country (Egypt) is full of artificially constructed canals (יאורים) and the Nile flows into them and fills them with water, since rain does not fall in Egypt as regularly as in other lands.

Verse 2

יפות מראה BEAUTIFUL TO THE SIGHT — This was an indication of a period of plenty, when people show themselves well-disposed one to another, for no-one then envies another person's prosperity (cf. Genesis Rabbah 89:4).
באחו IN THE REED-GRASS — in the marshy land. old French marais; English, marsh. Similar is (Job 8:11) "Can reed-grass (אחו) grow?"

Verse 3

ודקות בשר THIN-FLESHED in old French tenuis, meaning thin.

Verse 4

ותאכלנה AND THEY ATE — indicating that all the joy occasioned by the years of plenty would be forgotten in the days of famine.

Verse 5

בקנה אחד ON ONE STALK— Tuyau in old French
בריאות sains, English HEALTHY.

Verse 6

ושדופת PARCHED old French hales, (i.e. burnt up by the east wind) — But the Targum renders it by שקיפן קדום beaten upon by the east wind (and so burst open). This Aramaic word שקיפן is of the same root as משקוף a lintel, which is beaten continually by the door which knocks against it. קדים is THE EAST WIND — called bise in old French

Verse 7

הבריאות sains in old French; English HEALTHY.
והנה חלום AND, BEHOLD. IT WAS A DREAM — and behold a whole dream was completed before him (i.e. representation of what was evidently a completed whole had passed before him as a dream during his sleep) and demanded an interpreter.

Verse 8

ותפעם רוחו HIS SPIRIT WAS TROUBLED — The Targum renders it by "his spirit was agitated" (beaten upon) — it rang within like a bell (פעמון). With regard to Nebuchadnezzar it states (Daniel 2:1) ותתפעם רוחו (the verb in the Hithpael, thus having a double ת), because in that case there were two reasons for perturbation — his forgetting the dream and his ignorance of its interpretation (Genesis Rabbah 89:5).
חרטמי ENGRAVERS OF HIEROGLYPHICS — It is a compound word הנחרים בטימי those who excite themselves by means of the bones of the dead — because they enquire of the dead. טימי used in this phrase means bones in Aramaic. In the Misnna we have (Mishnah Oholot 17:3) "a house that is full of טמיא" — full of bones.
ואין פותר אותם לפרעה AND THERE WAS NONE THAT COULD INTERPRET IT TO PHARAOH — There were, indeed, some who interpreted it, but not in reference to Pharaoh (לפרעה) (i.e., their interpretations had no reference to him as a Pharaoh, as a king), so that their words found no acceptance by him and he was not satisfied with their interpretation. They said: "You will beget seven daughters and you will bury seven daughters" (Genesis Rabbah 89:6).

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

איש כפתרון חלמו [WE DREAMED] EACH MAN ACCORDING TO THE INTERPRETATION OF HIS DREAM — each of us dreamed a dream that fitted in with the interpretation that was given to us, and was exactly like it (not the kind of irrelevant interpretation offered you by your wise men).

Verse 12

נער עברי עבד A LAD, AN HEBREW, A SLAVE — Cursed be the wicked for the favours they do are never really complete! He mentions him in disparaging language.
נער a lad, unwise and unfitted for a high position.
עברי a Hebrew, who does not even know our language;
עבד a slave — and it is written in the laws of Egypt that a slave may neither become a ruler nor dress in princely robes (Genesis Rabbah 89:7).
איש כחלמו EACH MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DREAM — He interpreted in accordance with the dream and approximating to its contents.

Verse 13

השיב על כני HE RESTORED UNTO MY OFFICE — he means Pharaoh who was mentioned before, where it is said (v. 10) "Pharaoh was wroth with his servants". The phrase is elliptical not stating explicitly who restored, for it is not necessary to state explicitly who restored: obviously he who has the power to restore viz, Pharaoh. This is the ease with all elliptical sentences — they leave the matter indefinite as to who has to do the action (i.e. they omit the subject of the verb).

Verse 14

מן הבור OUT OF THE DUNGEON — from the place of imprisonment which was made as a kind of pit Similarly, wherever בור occurs in Scripture it signifies a pit — even though it does not contain water (for בור is used of a cistern, excavated as a pit out of rocks) it is still called a בור; old French fosse.
ויגלח AND HE CLIPPED HIS HAIR, out of respect for the king (Genesis Rabbah 89:9).

Verse 15

תשמע חלום לפתר אותו — means thou payest heed to and UNDERSTANDEST A DREAM TO INTERPRET IT.
תשמע means understanding and paying heed to. Examples are: (42:23) "Joseph (שומע) understood"; (Deuteronomy 28:49) "[a people] whose tongue thou shalt not understand (תשמע)". old French entendre.

Verse 16

בלעדי NOT I— (the word is compounded of בל and עדי, it does not extend to me) The wisdom to interpret dreams is not my own, but God will answer — He will put in my mouth an answer that will be for Pharaoh's welfare.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

דלות means LEAN, as (2 Samuel 13:4) "Why art thou thus becoming (דל) lean?" which occurs in the narrative of Amnon.
ורקות בשר AND LEAN-FLESHED — wherever רקות is found in Scripture it means spare (literally, deficient) of flesh; old French flouet.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

צנמות PARCHED — In Aramaic צונמא signifies a rock. They are like wood without moisture and as hard as a rock. But in the Targum it is translated by נצן לקין "their blossom is stricken" — there was nothing in them but the withered blossom, because they were empty of grain).

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

שבע שנים ושבע שנים SEVEN YEARS AND SEVEN YEARS —all together they are only seven years (not fourteen); and the reason why the dream was repeated is because the thing is ready to happen as he expressly stated to him afterwards (v. 32) "And for that the dream was doubled etc." With reference to the seven good years it says (v. 25) "[What He is about to do] God hath declared unto Pharaoh", because it (that period) was close at hand; whilst in the case of the seven years of famine it states (v. 28) "He hath shown unto Pharaoh" — because this thing was distant and far off (as regards time) the proper word to use in reference to it is "showing".

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

ונשכח כל השבע AND ALL THE PLENTY SHALL BE FORGOTTEN — this is the interpretation of the act of swallowing.

Verse 31

ולא יודע השבע AND THE PLENTY SHALL NOT BE KNOWN — this is the interpretation of (v. 21) "And it could not be noticed that they had eaten them up".

Verse 32

נכון —means PREPARED.

Verse 33

Verse 34

וחמש — render it as the Targum does "and they shall prepare". Similar is (Exodus 13:18) "וחמושים and prepared (for war)".

Verse 35

את כל אֹכֶל ALL THE FOOD — The word אֹכֶל is a noun and therefore the accent is on the א and the last syllable has the vowel Patach Katan (a name Rashi uses for our Segol), whilst אוֹכֵל — which is a participle, as for instance, (Leviticus 7:25) "For whosoever eateth (אוֹכֵל) the fat" — has the accent on the ultimate syllable, on the כ, and has the vowel Kametz Katan (Zéré).
תחת יד פרעה UNDER THE HAND OF PHARAOH — under his control and in his storehouses.

Verse 36

והיה האכל — means AND THE FOOD that is stored up SHALL BE AS ANY other DEPOSIT (פקדון) that is held in reserve for the maintenance of the people of the land.

Verse 37

Verse 38

הנמצא כזה CAN WE FIND SUCH A ONE AS THIS? — The Targum renders it: "can we find like this one" — meaning, "If we go to seek one could we find anyone like him?" הנמצא is a question, as is every ה prefixed to a word with the vowel Chataph Patach.

Verse 39

אין נבון וחכם כמוך THERE IS NONE SO DISCREET AND WISE AS THOU ART — If we do seek for a discreet and wise man as you suggested (v. 33) we shall find none like you).

Verse 40

ישק —The Targum renders it by יתזן which means SHALL BE FED — all my people's needs shall be provided through you. Similar are (15:2) "and the steward (ובן משק) of my house", and (Psalms 2:12) "Provide yourselves (נשקו) with purity" old French garnison.
רק הכסא ONLY IN THE THRONE — only in the fact that they shall call me king.
כסא THRONE is a metaphorical term for royal rank, like (1 Kings 1:37) "And he has made his throne (כסאו) greater than the throne of my lord king".

Verse 41

נתתי אתך The Targum translates it by— "I have appointed thee"; nevertheless even in this sense it really means "giving", as (Deuteronomy 26:19) "and to make thee (ולתתך) high". To express either the idea of raising to high rank or of degrading the term "to give" may be used. An example of the latter is (Malachi 2:9) "I have made thee (נתתיך) contemptible and base".

Verse 42

ויסר פרעה את טבעתו AND PHARAOH TOOK OFF HIS RING — When the king gives his ring it is a sign that the person to whom he hands it is to be second to him in rank.
שש בגדי FINE LINEN — this is a material much valued in Egypt (cf Rashi on Genesis 2:11).
רביד means A CHAIN — it is termed רביד because it is made up of links placed in a row. The root is the same as that found in (Proverbs 7:16) "I have decked (רבדתי) my bed with coverings of tapestry (מרבדים)" — i.e. I have placed on my couch rows of rugs. In Mishnaic Hebrew (Mishnah Middot 1:8) we have, "was surrounded with rows (רובדין) of stone", and (Yoma 43b) "on the (רובד) row of stones that was in the Temple Court" — referring to the pavement (רצפה).

Verse 43

במרכבת המשנה means — the chariot second in order to his chariot — that which drove next to his own.
אברך Render this as the Targum does: "This is the father (counsellor) of the king". In Aramaic (some editions read in Roman i.e. Latin) רך means king (rex). Thus in the chapter beginning with השותפין (Bava Batra 4a) we have: "neither a noble (ריכא) nor the son of a noble (ריכא)". In the Midrash (Sifré Devarim 1:1) Rabbi Judah explained: אברך is appellation for Joseph who was אב "a father" in wisdom and רך "tender" in years. Whereupon Rabbi Jose the son of a woman of Damascus said to him: "How much longer will you pervert for us the meaning of Scripture? The word אברך can only be connected with the word ברכים knees (i.e. "Bend the knee"), for all came in and went forth only by his permission, just as it states "and he set him [over all the land of Egypt]".

Verse 44

אני פרעה I AM PHARAOH in whose power it is to issue decrees for my kingdom, and I order that no man shall lift up his hand בלעדיך — without your permission. Another explanation of אני פרעה: I AM PHARAOH — I shall be king, but without thy permission etc. It is exactly similar in meaning to (v. 40) "only in the throne [will I be greater than thou]".
את ידו ואת רגלו HIS HAND OR HIS FOOT — Understand it as the Targum does: no man shall raise his hand to gird on a sword or raise his foot to mount a horse.

Verse 45

צפנת פענח signifies "Explainer of hidden things". There is no other example in Scripture of the word.
פוטי פרע — POTIPHERAH — he is identical with Potiphar. And he is called Potipherah (pherah meaning, disturbed or cut) as he became naturally castrated, since he desired Yosef for male intercourse (Sotah 13b).

Verse 46

Verse 47

ותעש הארץ AND THE EARTH BROUGHT FORTH — understand it as the Targum does: the inhabitants of the land gathered. Still the word ותעש does not really lose its meaning of “doing” or “making”.
לקמצים BY HANDFULS — they stored up the grain handful upon handful, fist upon fist.

Verse 48

אכל שדה העיר אשר סביבתיה נתן בתוכה THE FOOD OF THE FIELD WHICH WAS ROUND ABOUT EVERY CITY LAID HE UP IN THE SAME — for every district preserves its own produce; and for this people always put amongst the grain some of the earth of the place in which it grows and this prevents it decaying (Genesis Rabbah 90:5).

Verse 49

עד כי חדל לספר UNTIL THEY CEASED NUMBERING — until the one who was numbering stopped numbering — it is an elliptical phrase
כי אין מספר means because it was without number — The word כי has the meaning of because (Rosh Hashanah 3a).

Verse 50

בטרם תבא שנת הרעב BEFORE THE YEAR OF FAMINE CAME — from here we learn that a man must practise continence during times of famine (cf. Taanit 11a).

Verse 51

Verse 52

Verse 53

Verse 54

Verse 55

ותרעב כל ארץ מצרים AND THE LAND OF EGYPT WAS FAMISHED — for all the grain they had stored up rotted except that of Joseph (cf. Genesis Rabbah 91:5)
אשר יאמר לכם תעשו WHAT HE SAITH TO YOU, DO — He gave them this order because Joseph had told them to be circumcised. When they came to Pharaoh and said, "Thus he bids us do otherwise he will give us no corn", he asked them, "Why did you yourselves not lay up corn? Did he not publicly announce that years of famine were coming?" They answered him, "We gathered in much, but it has rotted". He said to them, "If this be so — what he saith to you, do. See, he laid a decree upon the produce and it rotted; what will happen if he lays a decree upon us that we should die!" (cf. Genesis Rabbah 91:5)

Verse 56

על כל פני הארץ OVER ALL THE FACE OF THE EARTH — Who are the face of the earth? the well-to-do people (Genesis Rabbah 91:5).
את כל אשר בהם — understand it as the Targum renders it: [JOSEPH OPENED ALL THE STOREHOUSES] IN WHICH THERE WAS CORN.
וישבור למצרים AND HE SOLD UNTO THE EGYPTIANS — The root שבר has the meaning both of selling and buying. Here it is used in the sense of selling, whereas in (43:2) "שברו for us a little food", it means buying. You cannot say that it (the word) can be used only of selling and buying grain for we find it used also of wine and milk: (Isaiah 55:1) "And come, buy (שברו) wine and milk without money and without price".

Verse 57

וכל הארץ באו מצרימה —Transpose the words and explain it thus: "and all the countries came into Egypt אל יוסף to Joseph לשבר to buy corn", for if you explain the words in the order in which they are written it ought to state לשבור מן יוסף to buy from Joseph.

Chapter 42

Verse 1

ויראו יעקב כי יש שבר כמצרים AND JACOB SAW THAT THERE WAS A SALE OF CORN IN EGYPT — How did he see it? Surely he did not see but he heard it, as it is said (v. 2) "Behold, I have heard... What, then, is meant by "And Jacob saw"? He saw in a holy dim vision that there was שֶׁבֶר hope for him in Egypt, but it was not a true prophetic vision telling him plainly that it was Joseph in whom his hope lay (Genesis Rabbah 91:6).
למה תתראו WHY DO YE LOOK UPON ONE ANOTHER? — Why do you show yourselves (pretend) before the children of Ishmael and the children of Esau as though you have plenty to eat (Taanit 10b). For at that time they still had some grain. I am of opinion that the real meaning of למה תתראו is: Why should every one gaze at you and wonder at you because you do not search for food before what you have in your possession comes to an end. From others I have heard that it has the meaning of leanness: why should you become lean through hunger? A similar use of the verb as that in the first explanation is (Proverbs 11:25) "And he that satisfieth abundantly shall be satisfied (יורא) also himself".

Verse 2

רדו שמה GO DOWN THITHER — He did not say to them לכו "Go ye" but רדו an allusion to the 210 years during which Israel was to be enslaved in Egypt corresponding to the numerical value of (210) רד"ו (Genesis Rabbah 91:2).

Verse 3

וירדו אחי יוסף AND JOSEPH S BRETHREN WENT DOWN — It does not call them "the sons of Jacob" (as in 5:5), thus suggesting that they regretted having sold him and that they had made up their mind to behave towards him in a brotherly manner and to redeem him at whatever price people might fix for them to pay (Midrash Tanchuma, Miketz 8).
עשרה TEN — What is the mention of this number intended to tell us? Is it not written (Genesis 42:4) "but Benjamin, Joseph's brother did he not send" (and we therefore know that only ten brothers went to Egypt)? But it means to suggest that so far as their feeling of brotherhood towards Joseph was concerned they were divided into ten, because the love and hatred that all of them bore him were not alike, where as in regard to buying corn they were at one and united (Genesis Rabbah 91:2).

Verse 4

פן יקראנו אסון LEST MISCHIEF BEFALL HIM — And at home could not mischief befall him?! Rabbi Eliezer the son of Jacob said: We may infer from this that Satan accuses a man at the time of danger (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayigash 1).

Verse 5

בתוך הבאים AMONG THOSE THAT CAME — They hid themselves in the crowd that people should not recognize them, for their father had bidden them not to show themselves all at one entrance to the city but that each should enter by a different gate in order that the evil eye should not have power over them (i.e. that they should not attract the envious attention of the people) for they were all handsome and stalwart men (Midrash Tanchuma 1.:10:6).

Verse 6

וישתחוו לו אפים means THEY PROSTRATED THEMSELVES ON THEIR FACES— Similarly wherever various forms of this verb (שחה) in the Hithpael occur it implies stretching out the hands and feet when a person casts himself on the ground in the act of prostration (Megillah 22b).

Verse 7

ויתנכר אליהם HE MADE HIMSELF STRANGE UNTO THEM — He made himself like a נכרי a stranger to them in his conversation, speaking harshly (Genesis Rabbah 91:7).

Verse 8

ויכר יוסף וגו' AND JOSEPH RECOGNISED HIS BRETHREN etc. — because, when he left them they were full-bearded (Yevamot 88a).
והם לא הכירוהו BUT THEY RECOGNISED HIM NOT — because when he left them he had no beard whereas now he had grown a beard.
A Midrashic explanation is: ויכר יוסף את אחיו JOSEPH RECOGNISED HIS BRETHREN — Now that they were in his power he recognised them as his brothers and had pity on them, והם לא הכירוהו but when he fell into their power, "they did not recognize him" as their brother, by acting towards him in brotherly manner (Genesis Rabbah 91:7).

Verse 9

אשר חלם להם WHICH HE HAD DREAMED OF THEM — להם means "about them". He then knew that they (the dreams) were being fulfilled, for they (his brothers) had bowed down to him.
ערות הארץ means THE NAKEDNESS OF THE LAND — from which side it might easily be conquered. Of similar meaning are, (Leviticus 20:18) "He hath made naked (הערה) her fountain"; (Ezekiel 16:7), "naked and (עריה) bare". Indeed all forms of this root ערה signify "uncovering"). Onkelos renders it by "the breach (בדקא) of the land", similar to (2 Kings 12:6), "the breach (בדק) of the house"— the defective places in the house — but he was not particular to translate according to the wording of the text (i.e. literally).

Verse 10

לא אדני NAY, MY LORD — do not say this, for behold ועבדיך באו לשבר אכל THY SERVANTS HAVE COME TO BUY FOOD.

Verse 11

כלנו בני איש אחד נחנו WE ARE ALL ONE MAN'S SONS — The Holy Spirit was enkindled in them and they included him with themselves (by using the word "We") that he, also, was the son of their father (Genesis Rabbah 91:7).
כנים means TRUE MEN — Similar examples of כן in sense of true, right, are (Exodus 10:29) "Thou hast spoken right (כן)"; (Numbers 27:7) "The daughters of Zelophechad speak (כן) right"; (Isaiah 16:6) "and his wrath, his untruthful (לא־כן) boastings".

Verse 12

כי ערות הארץ באתם לראות BUT TO SEE THE NAKEDNESS OF THE LAND YE ARE COME — I still insist that you are spies, for what you have just said bears this out for you have entered by ten different gates of the city; why did you not all enter by the same gate if you are really brothers and travelled together? (Genesis Rabbah 91:6).

Verse 13

ויאמרו שנים עשר עבדיך וגו' AND THEY SAID, THY SERVANTS WERE TWELVE BRETHREN — [AND ONE IS NO MORE], and it is on account of that one who is no more that we dispersed ourselves through the city in order that we might search for him (Genesis Rabbah 91:6).

Verse 14

הוא אשר דברתי THAT IS IT THAT I SPAKE UNTO YOU — The statement which I made — that you are spies — is true and certain. This is the meaning according to the literal sense of the words. A Midrashic explanation is: he said to them, "And if you find him (your brother) and they demand of YOU a large sum, would you redeem him?" They answered him, "Certainly!" He asked them, "If they tell you that they will not restore him to you for any sum of money, what would you do?" They replied, "That is what we have come for — to kill or to be killed". Whereupon he retorted: הוא אשר דברתי אליכם THAT IS JUST WHAT I SAID TO YOU — you have come to kill the people of this city. I have divined by my goblet that two of you destroyed the great city of Shechem (Genesis Rabbah 91:7).

Verse 15

חי פרעה BY THE LIFE OF PHARAOH — If Pharaoh lives! Whenever he swore for the sake of appearance (literally, falsely) he swore by Pharaoh's life (Genesis Rabbah 91:7).
אם תצאו מזה YE SHALL NOT GO FORTH FROM THIS i.e. from this place.

Verse 16

האמת אתכם means WHETHER THERE BE TRUTH IN YOU — therefore the ה has the vowel Patach, because it is a kind of question. And if you do not (ואם לא) bring) him חי פרעה כי מרגלים אתם BY THE LIFE OF PHARAOH, SURELY YOU ARE SPIES.

Verse 17

משמר WARD — the prison-house.

Verse 18

Verse 19

בבית משמרכם (literally, in the house of your ward) — the house in which you are at present imprisoned.
ואתם לכו הביאו BUT YE, GO, CARRY to your father's house.
שבר רעבון בתיכם CORN FOR THE FAMINE OF YOUR HOUSES — what you have purchased for the hunger of the people in your houses.

Verse 20

ויאמנו דבריכם— means so shall your words be verified and confirmed. Other examples are, (Numbers 5:22) "It is true, it is true (אמן אמן)", and (1 Kings 8:26) "Let thy word, I pray thee, be verified (יאמן)."

Verse 21

אבל VERILY — It is to be understood as the Targum renders it: בקושטא "in truth". I have seen a statement in (Genesis Rabbah 91:8) that in the Roman (Latin) language אבל means ברם (verum) truly, indeed.
באה אלינו [THIS DISTRESS] HAS COME UPON US — The word באה has the accent upon the ב because it is the perfect tense — for it had already come upon them. The Targum therefore renders it by אתת which is a perfect tense in Aramaic — it has come.

Verse 22

וגם דמו ALSO HIS BLOOD [IS REQUIRED] — the particles את and גם extend the scope of the clause; here it implies "his blood and also the blood of his old father" (Genesis Rabbah 91:8).

Verse 23

והם לא ידעו כי שמע יוסף AND THEY KNEW NOT THAT JOSEPH שמע UNDERSTOOD their language, and they said this in his presence.
כי המליץ בינתם FOR THE INTERPRETER WAS BETWEEN THEM — for when they had spoken to him there was an interpreter between them who knew both the Hebrew and the Egyptian languages. He interpreted their words to Joseph and Joseph's words to them. Consequently they were under the impression that Joseph did not understand the Hebrew language.
המליץ THE INTERPRETER — This was Manasseh (Genesis Rabbah 91:8).

Verse 24

ויסב מעליהם AND HE TURNED AWAY FROM THEM — He moved some distance away from them so that they should not see him weeping.
ויבך AND HE WEPT because he heard that they regretted their past conduct to him.
את שמעון SIMEON — he had cast him into the pit and it was he who had said to Levi "Behold, this dreamer cometh" (Tanchuma Yashan 1:10:17). Another explanation is: It was Joseph's intention to separate him from Levi lest the two of them might conspire to kill him.
ויאסור אתו לעיניהם AND HE BOUND HIM BEFORE THEIR EYES — He only kept him in bonds whilst he was before their eyes, but as soon as they departed he freed him and gave him food and drink (Genesis Rabbah 91:8).

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

ויפתח האחד literally, AND THE ONE OPENED HIS SACK — This was Levi who remained alone (one) being without Simeon his companion (cf Targum Jonathan).
במלון means the place where they stayed over night — THE INN.
אמתחתו is the sack (שק) just mentioned.

Verse 28

וגם הנה באמתחתי AND, LO, IT IS EVEN IN MY SACK — the money also (גם) is in it together with the grain.
מה זאת עשה אלהים לנו WHAT IS THIS THAT GOD HATH DONE UNTO US by bringing us into the danger of this accusation? For the money can only have been put back into our sacks in order to bring an accusation against us.

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

ואת הארץ תסחרו AND YE SHALL TRAVEL IN THE LAND — It means literally, "ye may travel round the land". All such words as סוחרים merchants, סחורה merchandise, are derived from this root סחר to go round, because the merchants travel round looking for merchandise.

Verse 35

צרור כספו means HIS BUNDLE OF MONEY.

Verse 36

אתי שכלתם ME YE HAVE BEREAVED OF CHILDREN — The inference is that he suspected them of having slain or sold him (Simeon) as they had done to Joseph (Genesis Rabbah 91:9).
שכלתם YE HAVE BEREAVED — any-one whose children are lost to him may be called (שכול) bereaved.

Verse 37

Verse 38

לא ירד בני עמכם MY SON SHALL NOT GO DOWN WITH YOU — He did not accept Reuben's offer. He said, "What a fool is this oldest son of mine! He suggests that I should kill his sons. Are they his only and not mine also?" (Genesis Rabbah 91:9)

Chapter 43

Verse 1

Verse 2

כאשר כלו לאכל WHEN THEY HAD EATEN UP — Judah said to them: Leave the old man alone until the house will run short of bread (Midrash Tanchuma, Miketz 8).
כאשר כלו WHEN THEY HAD FINISHED [EATING THE GRAIN] — The Targum renders it by כד שציאו which means "when they finished" in the sense of making an end of doing an action. He who has the reading in the Targum כד ספיקו "when they had enough" is in error. The words (24:22) כאשר כלו הגמלים לשתות "when the camels had finished drinking" are rightly rendered in the Targum כד ספיקו which means "when they had drunk sufficient for their needs", for that was the end of their drinking. Here, however, this phrase "when they had finished eating" refers to the time when the food came to an end, and we should render it in the Targum by כד שציאו when they had finished (which means finishing in the sense of nothing being left over).

Verse 3

העד העד [THE MAN] DID SOLEMNLY PROTEST UNTO US — The Hebrew is an expression signifying warning and it is derived from the root עוד to bear witness, because a warning is, as a rule, given in the presence of

witnesses. Other examples are (Jeremiah 11:7) "I earnestly forewarned (העדותי) your fathers", and (Exodus 19:21) "Go, warn (העד) the people. "לא תראו מני בלתי אחיכם אתכם means YE SHALL NOT SEE ME IF YOUR BROTHER BE NOT WITH YOU — Onkelos renders it by אלהין כד אחוכון עמכון,"except when your brother is with you" adding the word כד when, to which there is no corresponding word in the Hebrew text. He gave the explanation of the word (בלתי) correctly, but he was not particular to translate according to the exact expression used in the text.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

לנו ולמולדתנו CONCERNING OURSELVES AND CONCERNING OUR KINDRED — concerning our families. A Midrashic comment based upon the meaning of מולדת, "birth" — He asked of us concerning the circumstances of our birth — is: he could even tell us of what kind of wood our cradles were made (Genesis Rabbah 91:10).
ונגד לו AND WE TOLD HIM that we had a father and a brother.
על פי הדברים האלה ACCORDING TO THE TENOR OF THESE WORDS — we were forced to tell him according to the tenor of the questions he put to us.
כי יאמר THAT HE WOULD SAY — The word כי is used here in the sense of אשר "that". The word כי may be used in the sense of אם and אם may be used in the sense of אשר; therefore this (i.e. אשר) is one of the four meanings in which כי, according to the Rabbis, is used, viz., אם (Rosh Hashanah 3a), for the word כי here has the same meaning as אם, as in (24:33) עד אם דברתי דברי "until that I have spoken my words" (where אם is the same as כי or אשר).

Verse 8

ונחיה THAT WE MAY LIVE — (literally, and we shall live). The spirit of prophecy was enkindled within him. He said: owing to this journey your spirit will live again, which indeed happened, as it is said, (Genesis 45:27) "And the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived".
ולא נמות AND THAT WE MAY NOT DIE of hunger. As for Benjamin it is doubtful whether he will be seized or whether he will not be seized, but as for us, we shall certainly all die of hunger if we do not go. It is better that you should let go what is doubtful and snatch at what is certain (Genesis Rabbah 91:6).

Verse 9

והצגתיו לפניך AND SET HIM BEFORE THEE — for I will not bring him back to you dead but alive.
וחטאתי לך כל הימים THEN SHALL I HAVE SINNED AGAINST THEE ALL THE DAYS — also in the world to come (Genesis Rabbah 91:10).

Verse 10

לולא התמהמהנו EXCEPT WE HAD LINGERED — through you, we would have already come back with Simeon and you would not have had this anxiety all these days.

Verse 11

אפוא NOW — This is really a redundant word used in Hebrew for stylistic purposes. If it be so that I am compelled to do this — that I must send him with you — I must endeavour to seek where (אי) there is here (פה) some measure and plan to propose to you and therefore, I say: "Do this".
מזמרת הארץ OF THE CHOICE PRODUCTS OF THE LAND — This is rendered in the Targum by "Take of that which is praised in the land" — that about which people sing its praise (מזמרים) when it comes into existence (Genesis Rabbah 91:11).
נכאת is WAX (Genesis Rabbah 91:11; cf. 37:25).
בטנים PISTACHIO-NUTS — I do not know what these are. but in the definitions given in the Dictionary of R. Machir I have read that they are Pistachios; I think that they are peaches.

Verse 12

וכסף משנה AND DOUBLE MONEY — twice as much as at first.
קחו בידכם TAKE IN YOUR HAND to buy food: perhaps the market-price has risen (Genesis Rabbah 91:11).
אולי משגה הוא PERADVENTURE IT WAS AN OVERSIGHT — perhaps the man in charge of the house forgot it inadvertently).

Verse 13

Verse 14

ואל שדי AND GOD ALMIGHTY — Now you lack nothing except prayer, and therefore I pray for you (Genesis Rabbah 91:11).
אל שדי God שַׁדַּי who gives plenteous mercy and in whose hand is sufficient power to give — may He give you mercy. This is the real meaning of the words. A Midrashic explanation is: He who said to the Universe, "Enough!", may He say "Enough!" to my troubles. I have had no rest since my youth — trouble through Laban, trouble through Esau, the trouble of Rachel, the trouble of Dinah, the trouble of Joseph, the trouble of Simeon, the trouble of Benjamin (Genesis Rabbah 92:1).
ושלח לכם means AND MAY HE RELEASE UNTO YOU, as the Targum renders it — may He release him from his bonds. It has the same meaning as (Exodus 21:26) "He shall let him go, יְשַׁלְּחֶנּוּ (Piel) free". It would not have been correct to translate it in the Targum by "and may he send to you your other brother", because, as a matter of fact, they were going there where he was.
את אחיכם YOUR BROTHER — This refers to Simeon.
אחר THE OTHER ONE — The spirit of prophecy was diffused upon him so that he included Joseph also (Genesis Rabbah 92:3).
ואני AND AS FOR ME — until you return I shall feel myself bereaved of my children being in constant suspense.
כאשר שכלתי means EVEN AS I AM BEREAVED of Joseph and of Simeon
שכלתי I SHALL BE BEREAVED of Benjamin.

Verse 15

ואת בנימין [AND THEY TOOK DOUBLE MONEY] AND BENJAMIN — We render this in the Targum by ודברו ית בנימן "and they led Benjamin away", because the

same expression cannot be used in Aramaic for taking money and for taking a person. In the case of a thing that can be taken in the hand the Targum uses ונסיב "and he carried" for the Hebrew verb לקח, whilst in the case of a person who is taken by persuasion (literally, by leading him with words) the Targum uses ודבר and he led away.

Verse 16

וטבח טבח והכן AND SLAUGHTER THE BEASTS AND MAKE READY — The Hebrew is the same as ולטבח טבח ולהכין (infinitives) "and to slaughter… and to prepare". The word וּטְבַח is not an imperative, for this should be וּטְבַח (as from מָשַׁח the imperative is מְשַׁח).
בצהרים AT NOON — This word is rendered in the Targum by בשירותא which in Aramaic denotes the first meal during the day ; in old French disner. It occurs frequently in the Talmud: (Taanit 11a, lib) "He threw the dog שירותיה his meal; (Berakhot 39b) "he cut bread for the whole of שירותא his meal." But wherever צהרים means noon it is translated in the Targum by טיהרא.

Verse 17

Verse 18

ויראו האנשים AND THE MEN WERE AFRAID — The word ויראו is written with two yods and its translation in the Targum is ודחילו and they were afraid.
כי הובאו בית יוסף BECAUSE THEY WERE BROUGHT INTO JOSEPH S HOUSE, and it was not usual for other people who came to buy corn to stay overnight in Joseph's house but in the inns of the city. ויראו AND THEY WERE AFRAID, because this could be only for the purpose of putting them in prison.
אנחנו מובאים WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT inside this house.
להתגלל means THAT THERE MAY BE ROLLED UPON US an accusation regarding the money AND THAT THIS MAY FALL UPON US. And according to Onkelos who rendered ולהתנפל עלינו by ולאסתקפא עלנא, it signifies seeking an occasion — just as we render in the Targum the words (Deuteronomy 12:17) עלילת דברים, which mean a pretext, by תסקופי מלין "intrigues" — but he did not translate it literally. The word ולהתגלל which he translated by לאתרברבא "to play the lord over us" he takes as connected in meaning with (Ecclesiastes 12:6) "the bowl of (גלת) gold", and (Nahum 2:8) "And Huzzab the queen (גלתה) is carried away", where these words from the root גלל denote symbolically royal rank.

Verse 19

Verse 20

בי אדני O, MY LORD — The word בי is an expression of entreaty (בעיא) and supplication. In Aramaic we have ביא ביא "woe, woe!" (Yoma 69b).
ירד ירדנו WE CAME INDEED DOWN — This is a "come down" (degradation) for us. We have been accustomed to give food to others and now we are dependent upon you (Genesis Rabbah 92:4).

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

אלהיכם YOUR GOD — your God because of your own merits: and if your own merits do not suffice, then ואלהי אביכם THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER — because of your father's merits HE HAS GIVEN YOU A TREASURE (Genesis Rabbah 92:4).

Verse 24

ויבא האיש AND THE MAN BROUGHT [THE MEN] — There is here a mention of bringing in after bringing in has been mentioned in Genesis 43:17, because then they hustled him outside so that they spoke to him at the door of the house (cf. Genesis 43:18 and Genesis 43:19 where they said אנחנו מובאים "we are being brought"), but as soon as he said to them "Peace be with you" they followed and went after him, into the house (Genesis Rabbah 92:4).

Verse 25

ויכינו means AND THEY MADE READY — they laid it out ornately in fine vessels.

Verse 26

הביתה [THEY BROUGHT THE PRESENT] INTO THE HOUSE — from the outer hall into the reception hall.

Verse 27

Verse 28

ויקדו וישתחו AND THEY BOWED THE HEAD AND PROSTRATED THEMSELVES — in recognition of his enquiry regarding their welfare. The root קדד denotes bowing the head: the verb שחה in the Hiphil denotes prostration upon the ground (Megillah 22b).

Verse 29

אלהים יחנך בני GOD BE GRACIOUS UNTO THEE, MY SON — With regard of the other sons of Jacob we have heard the expression "grace" used — viz., (33:5) "[The children] whom God hath graciously given (חנן) to thy servant". But Benjamin had not then been born and therefore was not included amongst the children of whom Jacob used this term; on this account Joseph used the term "grace" in blessing him (Genesis Rabbah 92:5).

Verse 30

כי נכמרו רחמיו FOR HIS COMPASSION WAS EXCITED — He asked him, "Have you a brother of the same mother as yourself?" — He replied, "I had a brother but I know not where he is". — "Have you sons?" He replied, "I have ten". Joseph asked him, "And what are their names?" Benjamin replied, "Bela, Becher etc." (cf. 46:21). Joseph then enquired, "What are the ideas underlying these names?" He replied, "They all have some reference to my

brother and the troubles that have befallen him. I called them Bela (בלע) because he disappeared (נבלע) amongst alien nations; Becher (בכר) because he was the firstborn (בכור) of his mother; Ashbel (אשבאל) because God sent him into captivity (שבאו אל), Gera (גרא) because he had to live (גר) in a foreign country; Naaman (נעמן) because he was exceedingly pleasant (נעים); Ahi (אחי) and Rosh (ראש) because he was my brother (אח) and my superior (ראש) ; Muppim (מופים) because he learned from the mouth (מפי) of my father; Huppim (חופים) because he did not witness my marriage (חופה —marriage canopy) and I did not witness his marriage; and Ard (ארד) because he went down (ירד) amongst the nations" — just as it related in Treatise Sotah 36b. When he heard all this immediately his affection was enkindled.
נכמרו means WAS ENKINDLED, BECAME HOT — In Mishnaic Hebrew we have (Bava Metzia 74a) "upon (כומר) a mass of heated olives"; in Aramaic (Pesachim 58a) "because of the (מכמר) drying up (through heat of the weather) of the meat". And in Biblical Hebrew we have (Lamentations 5:10) "Our skin is hot (נכמרו) as though by an oven" — i.e. it became hot and full of wrinkles "because of the burning heat of the famine", for it is the nature of any skin to wrinkle and shrink together when it becomes hot.

Verse 31

ויתאפק AND HE REFRAINED HIMSELF — He made a strong effort. The root in this sense occurs in (Job 41:7) אפיקי "the strong parts of the shields". Similar also is (Job 12:21) "And He looseth the belt of the (אפיקים) strong".

Verse 32

כי תועבה היא FOR THAT IS AN ABOMINATION — it is a hateful thing to the Egyptians to eat together with the Hebrews. Onkelos states a reason for this.

Verse 33

הבכור כבכרתו THE FIRST-BORN ACCORDING TO HIS BIRTHRIGHT — He struck the goblet and called aloud: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulon, sons of one mother, take your seats at the table in this order which is the order in which you were born — and similarly in the case of them all. When he reached Benjamin's name he said, "This one has no mother and I have no mother — let him sit beside me" (Genesis Rabbah 92:5).

Verse 34

משאת means PORTIONS OF FOOD.
חמש ידות FIVE TIMES — His own portion that was due to him alike with his brothers and additional portions given to him by Joseph, Asenath, Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis Rabbah 92.5).
וישכרו עמו AND THEY DRANK WITH HIM — but from the day they sold him they had not drunk wine nor had he drunk wine. That day, however, they drank wine (Genesis Rabbah 92:5).

Chapter 44

Verse 1

Verse 2

גבִיעִי MY CUP — a long goblet called maderin in old French.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

חלילה לעבדיך FAR BE IT FROM TIIY SERVANTS — It is a degradation (חולין a profane thing) — this is an expression denoting a shameful act. The Targum חס לעבדיך "a sparing to thy servants!" signifies "May there be a sparing from God upon us that we should not do this thing" The expression חס ושלום occurs often in the Talmud in this sense — Forbearance and peace!

Verse 8

הן כסף אשר מצאנו BEHOLD THE MONEY WHICH WE FOUND — This is one of the ten inferences from minor to major mentioned in the Bible. They are all enumerated in Genesis Rabbah (Genesis Rabbah 92:7).

Verse 9

Verse 10

גם עתה כדבריכם IT WERE RIGHT TO BE ACCORDING TO YOUR WORDS — Indeed, this is only right: in very truth it should be according to your words since you are all guilty in this matter. Because when there are ten men and stolen property is found in possession of one of them, all of them are involved in the theft. I, however, shall deal with you within the line of strict justice (i.e. more equitably) and only אשר ימצא אתו יהיה לי עבד HE WITH WHOM IT IS FOUND SHALL BE MY BONDMAN (Genesis Rabbah 92:8).

Verse 11

Verse 12

בגדול החל AT THE ELDEST HE BEGAN — so that they should not perceive that he knew where it was (Genesis Rabbah 92.8).

Verse 13

וימעמוס איש על חמרו THEY LADED EVERY MAN HIS ASS — They were stalwart men and did not require the assistance of each other in loading (Genesis Rabbah 92:8).
וישבו העירה AND THEY RETURNED TO THE CITY — It was the metropolis and yet Scripture says העירה — an ordinary city! But this is because in their eyes it was regarded as a very medium-sized city of only ten inhabitants if it became a matter of waging war against it (Genesis Rabbah 92:8).

Verse 14

עודנו שם HE WAS YET THERE — for he was waiting for them.

Verse 15

הלא ידעתם כי נחש ינחש וגו' KNOW YE NOT THAT SUCH A MAN AS I CAN CERTAINLY DIVINE? — Are you not aware that so distinguished a person as I am knows how to divine, and (even though you have robbed me of the goblet by which I divine) to discover by my own intelligence and common sense or by logical deduction that it was you who stole the goblet!

Verse 16

מצא האלהים GOD HATH FOUND OUT — We know that we have done no wrong, but it has been brought about by the Holy One, blessed be He, that this should come upon us. The Creditor has found an opportunity to collect His debt (Genesis Rabbah 92:9).
מה נצטדק How shall we justify ourselves? — This is a verbal form of צדק. In the same way every root whose first letter is צ when used in the Hithpael or Nithpael takes a ט instead of the ת of the prefix. This, however, is not placed before the first radical letter, but between the first two letters of the root. For example: נצטדק of the root צדק; (Daniel 4:13) "and let it be wet (ויצטבע)" of the root צבע to steep; Joshua 9:4) "and made as if they had been ambassadors (ויצטירו)", of the same root as ציר in (Proverbs 13:17), ציר אמונים a faithful ambassador"; (Joshua 9:12) "we took our provision (הצטידנו)" of the same root as צדה in (Genesis 45:21) צדה לדרך "provision for the way". And in the same way, with a root whose first letter is ס or ש, when it is used in the Hithpael, the ת of the prefix separate (i.e. is placed between) the first two letters of the root. For example: (Ecclesiastes 12:5) "and the grasshopper shall drag itself along heavily (ויסתבל)" from the root סבל "to carry a load"; (Daniel 7:8) "I considered (משתכל הוית) the horns", from the root שכל to reflect on: (Micah 6:16) "for the statutes of Omri are kept (וישתמרו)" from the root שמר to keep; (Isaiah 59:15) "And he that departeth from evil (משתולל) is regarded as a fool", from the same root as שולל in (Job 12:17) "He leadeth counsellors away (שולל) as though they were fools"; (Exodus 9:17) "Thou treadest down (מסתולל) my people", from the same root as סלולה in (Jeremiah 18:15) "a way not trodden down (סלולה)."

Verse 17

Verse 18

ויגש אליו וגו' .. דבר באזני אדני THEN JUDAH CAME NEAR TO HIM etc. [LET THY SERVANT SPEAK] A WORD IN MY LORD S EARS etc. May my words penetrate into your ears (Genesis Rabbah 93:6).

ואל יחר אפך AND LET NOT THY WRATH GLOW — From these words you may infer that he spoke to him in harsh terms.
כי כמוך כפרעה FOR THOU ART EVEN AS PHARAOH — In my sight you are as important as the king. This is the literal meaning, but a Midrashic explanation is: You will ultimately be stricken with leprosy for detaining Benjamin even as your ancestor Pharaoh was stricken because he detained my ancestress Sarah one night. Another explanation is: you are as unreliable as Pharaoh — just as Pharaoh issues decrees and does not carry them out, makes promises and does not fulfil them, so also do you. Is this what you meant by "setting your eyes" upon him when you said (Genesis 44:21) "Bring him down and I will set mine eyes upon him"? Still another interpretation of כי כמוך כפרעה FOR THOU SHALT BECOME EVEN AS PHARAOH: if you provoke me I will slay you and your master (Genesis Rabbah 93:6).

Verse 19

אדני שאל את עבדיו MY LORD ASKED HIS SERVANTS — From the beginning you came with a pretext against us. What need had you to ask us all these questions? Were we asking for your daughter in marriage or were you asking for our sister? And yet

Verse 20

ונאמר אל אדני WE SAID TO MY LORD — we kept nothing back from you (Genesis Rabbah 93:8).
ואחיו מת AND HIS BROTHER IS DEAD — He uttered this untruth out of fear. He thought: if I tell him that he is alive he may say "Bring him to me".
לבדו לאמו [HE] ALONE [IS LEFT] OF HIS MOTHER — of that mother he has no other brother.

Verse 21

Verse 22

ועזב את אביו ומת FOR IF HE SHOULD LEAVE HIS FATHER, HE WOULD DIE — If he leaves his father we shall be in anxiety lest he die on the journey, because indeed his mother died during a journey.

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

וקרהו אסון AND MISCHIEF BEFALL HIM — For Satan brings charges against men in the hour of danger (Genesis Rabbah 91.9).
והורדתם את שיבתי וגו' YE SHALL BRING DOWN MY GRAY HAIRS etc. — Whilst Benjamin is beside me I find comfort in him for the loss of his mother and his brother, so that if he dies it will seem to me as though the three of them died in the same day.

Verse 30

Verse 31

והיה כראותו כי אין הנער ומת IT SHALL COME TO PASS WHEN HE SEETH THAT THE LAD IS NOT WITH US, THAT HE WILL DIE, i.e. his father will die of grief.

Verse 32

כי עבדך ערב את הנער FOR THY SERVANT BECAME SURETY FOR THE LAD — Should you ask why I enter into the contest (champion his cause) more strongly than my other brothers — then I tell you: I have more to lose; they all stand outside the matter (are less concerned with it than I am), but I have placed myself under a firm bond to be an outcast in both worlds.

Verse 33

ישב נא עבדך וגו' LET THY SERVANT ABIDE etc. — For all purposes I am superior to him in strength — whether for battle or for service as a slave.

Chapter 45

Verse 1

ולא יכל יוסף להתאפק לכל הנצבים AND JOSEPH COULD NOT REFRAIN HIMSELF BEFORE ALL THEM THAT STOOD — He could not bear that the Egyptians should stand by him witnessing how his brothers would be put to shame when he made himself known to them.

Verse 2

וישמע בית פרעה AND THE HOUSE OF PHARAOH HEARD IT — The house of Pharaoh means his servants and the members of his household. בית here does not mean an actual house (so that the words would mean "and one heard it in the house of Pharaoh; cf. 5:16), but it is similar to (1 Kings 12:21) בית ישראל "the house of Israel", or בית יהודה the house of Judah", meaning the people of Judah. old French maisniede English all the inmates of a house.

Verse 3

נבהלו מפניו [FOR] THEY WERE AMAZED AT HIS PRESENCE — out of shame.

Verse 4

גשו נא אלי STEP NEAR TO ME, I PRAY YOU — He saw that they recoiled and he said to himself "Now my brothers feel ashamed". He therefore called to them and showed them that he was circumcised. (Genesis Rabbah 93:10).

Verse 5

למחיה FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE — i.e. that I may be to you for a preservation of life.

Verse 6

כי זה שנתים הרעב means FOR THESE TWO YEARS OF FAMINE have passed of the years of famine that are to come in the land.

Verse 7

Verse 8

לאב A FATHER — he made me his colleague and he bestowed on me the dignity of "Father of the king."

Verse 9

ועלו אל אבי AND GO UP TO MY FATHER — he said "go up" because the land of Israel is situated higher than all the neighbouring countries (Kiddushin 69a).

Verse 10

Verse 11

פן תורש — The Targum renders this by דלמא תתמסכן LEST THOU BE IMPOVERISHED, for the verb is of the same root as we find in (1 Samuel 2:7) "The Lord maketh poor (מורישׁ) and maketh rich".

Verse 12

והנה עיניכם ראות AND, BEHOLD, YOUR EYES SEE my glory, and that I am your brother, and further כי פי המדבר אליכם THAT IT IS MY MOUTH THAT SPEAKETH TO YOU in the Holy Language) (Genesis Rabbah 93:10).
ועיני אחי בנימין [YOUR EYES] AND THE EYES OF MY BROTHER BENJAMIN — he mentions them separately and alike to imply: just as I harbour no hatred against Benjamin, my brother, for he was no party to selling me, so is my heart free from hatred against you (Megillah 16b).

Verse 13

Verse 14

ויפל על צוארי בנימן אחיו ויבך AND HE FELL UPON HIS BROTHER BENJAMIN'S NECK AND WEPT — for the Temples which were to be in Benjamin's territory and which would ultimately be laid in ruins (Genesis Rabbah 93:12).
ובנימין בכה על צואריו AND BENJAMIN WEPT ON HIS NECK — for the Tabernacle of Shiloh which was to be in Joseph's territory and which would ultimately be laid in ruins (Genesis Rabbah 93:12).

Verse 15

ואחרי כן AND AFTER THAT — after they saw that he wept and realized that he was peaceably inclined towards them, דברו אחיו אתו HIS BRETHREN SPAKE WITH HIM — For at first they felt abashed before him.

Verse 16

והקל נשמע בית פרעה AND THE FAME THEREOF WAS HEARD IN PHARAOH'S HOUSE — It is the same as בבית, in the house of Pharaoh and here it denotes the actual house (cp. 45:2).

Verse 17

טענו את בעירכם LADE YOUR BEASTS — with grain.

Verse 18

את טוב אוץ מצרים THE BEST OF THE LAND OF EGYPT — viz., the district of Goshen. He prophesied without knowing what he was prophesying when he said "I shall give you the best of the land of Egypt", for ultimately they were to make it like the depths of the sea in which there are no fish (i.e. that they would carry away the best of the land when they would leave Egypt) (Berakhot 9b).
חלב הארץ THE FAT OF THE LAND — The word חלב always denotes the best part of a thing.

Verse 19

ואתה צויתה NOW THOU ART COMMANDED — supply the words by me (lit, by my mouth) to say unto them
זאת עשו THIS DO YE — Thus tell them: that it is done with my permission.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

שלח כזאת HE SENT AFTER THIS MANNER — according to this amount. And what was the amount? עשרה חמרים וגו׳ ten asses etc (i.e. as much as ten asses could carry).
מטוב מצרים OF THE BEST THINGS OF EGYPT — We find it stated in the Talmud (Megillah 16b) that he sent him old wine which old people like very much. The Midrash states that he sent him split beans. (Genesis Rabbah 94:2).

בר ולחם CORN AND BREAD — understand this as the Targum renders it. ומזון means things that are eaten together with bread.

Verse 24

אל תרגזו בדרך BE NOT AGITATED BY THE WAY — Do not busy yourselves with Halachic discussions lest the road become unsteady for you (i.e. lest you lose your way). Another explanation is: Do not take very long steps and enter the town where you will stay over night while the sun is still shining (Taanit 10b). According to the plain sense of the verse, however, it must be explained thus: Because they felt ashamed he feared that they might quarrel on the way about his having been sold, arguing one with another. One would say: "It was through you he was sold". Another: "It was you who made slanderous statements about him and caused us to hate him".

Verse 25

Verse 26

וכי הוא משל — the word וכי is used here in the sense of אשר "that": AND THAT HE WAS RULER.
ויפג לבו AND JACOB'S HEART CONTINUED COLD — his heart passed away (נחלף) and ceased to believe — his heart took no notice of their words. The word ויפג has the same meaning as (Beitzah 14a) "all spices let their taste pass away (מפיגין)" (i.e. lose their taste) in Mishnaic Hebrew. Similar is (Lamentations 3:49) "without (הפגות) intermission". The words (Jeremiah 48:11) "and his scent is not changed (נמר)" is rendered in the Targum by "and his scent has not את כל דברי יוסף.

Verse 27

.(פג ALL THE WORDS OF JOSEPH — As evidence that it was Joseph who was sending this message he had informed them of the religious subject he had been studying with his father at the time when he left him, viz., the section of the Heifer (עגלה) that had its neck broken (Deuteronomy 21:6). It is to this that Scripture refers in the words "And he saw (i.e comprehended the meaning of) the עגלות (here to be taken in sense of Heifer) which Joseph had sent — and it does not state "which Pharaoh had sent" (as one would expect if עגלות meant wagons) (Genesis Rabbah 94:3).
ותחי רוח יעקב THE SPIRIT OF JACOB [THEIR FATHER] REVIVED — The Shechinah that had departed from him, rested again upon him (cf. Onkelos).

Verse 28

רב ENOUGH or MUCH — Much joy and pleasure is still in store for me, since my son Joseph is yet alive.

Chapter 46

Verse 1

The suffix ה replaces the prefix ל locale (Yevamot 13b).
לאלהי אביו יצחק TO THE GOD OF HIS FATHER, ISAAC — The duty of honouring one's father is more imperative than that of honouring one's grandfather

(Genesis Rabbah 94:5); therefore the sacrifices are associated with the name of Isaac and not with that of Abraham.

Verse 2

יעקב יעקב JACOB, JACOB — The repetition of the name is a mark of affection (Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Nedavah, Chapter 1 12).

Verse 3

אל תירא מרדה מצרימה FEAR NOT TO GO DOWN TO EGYPT — God said this to him because he was grieved that he was compelled to leave the Land of Israel (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 39).

Verse 4

ואנכי אעלך AND I MYSELF WILL ALSO SURELY BRING THEE UP AGAIN — Here He promised him that he would be buried in the Holy Land (Talmud Yerushalmi Sotah 1:10).

Verse 5

Verse 6

אשר רכשו בארץ כנען WHICH THEY HAD GOTTEN IN THE LAND OF CANAAN — But all that he had gotten in Padan-aram he gave to Esau in payment for his share in the Cave of Machpelah. He said, "The possessions I obtained outside the land are of no value to me". It is to this that the words refer (Genesis 50:5) "[Bury me in my burying-place] which כריתי" I obtained for myself by means of a כרי. He placed before him (Esau) piles of gold and silver like a heap (כרי) of corn and said to him, "Take these in exchange for your share in the Cave of Machpelah" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 6).

Verse 7

ובנות בניו HIS SON'S DAUGHTERS — these were Serah, the daughter of Asher, and Jochebed, the daughter of Levi.

Verse 8

הבאים מצרימה WHO CAME INTO EGYPT — Relative to that time when they were going to Egypt Scripture calls them "those who were coming" to Egypt (the participle) and one, therefore, need not be surprised that it does not state אשר באו "who came" (the perfect tense).

Verse 9

Verse 10

בן הכנענית THE SON OF THE CANAANITISH WOMAN — means the son of Dinah, who had been associated with a Canaanite (Shechem). When they (her brothers) had killed Shechem, Dinah refused to leave the city until Simeon swore to her that he would marry her and regard the child she was about to bear as his own (cf. Genesis Rabbah 80:11).

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

אלה בני לאה ואת דינה בתו THESE ARE THE SONS OF LEAH WITH HIS DAUGHTER DINAH. — Scripture associates the men with the name of Leah and the women with that of Jacob for the reason given the Talmud (Niddah 31a).
שלשים ושלש THIRTY THREE — But in the enumeration above you will find only thirty-two. The one whose name is omitted is Jochebed who was born "between the walls" just as they entered the border city, as it is said (Numbers 26:59) "Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bore to Levi in Egypt — she was born in Egypt, but she was not conceived in Egypt (Bava Batra 123).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

בני רחל אשת יעקב THE SONS OF RACHEL, JACOB'S WIFE — In the case of all the other wives of Jacob the term אשת "wife" is not mentioned. But the reason is because she was the chief mistress of the household (Genesis Rabbah 73:1).

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

כל הנפש הבאה ליעקב EVERY SOUL THAT WAS COMING WITH JACOB — every soul that left Canaan to go to Egypt The word הבאה, here, is not a perfect tense, but a participle with a relative present sense — just as (Ester 2:4) "In the evening she (באה) was coming" and (Genesis 29:7) "and, behold, Rachel his daughter is coming (באה)" and therefore the accent is on the last syllable, on the א, because when they left, coming from the land of Canaan, they were only sixty-six. But at the second mention of this word (Genesis 46:27) — "every soul of the house of Jacob, which came (הבאה) into Egypt were seventy" — it is a perfect tense and therefore it is accented on the last but one syllable, on the ב. The reason is, that when they came there, they were seventy, for they found Joseph and his two sons there, and Jochebed was added to their number "between the walls". According to the view of the Rabbi (i. e. R. Jehudah, cf. Genesis Rabbah 84) who stated that with each of Jacob's sons a twin-sister was born, we must say that these died before they (Jacob and his family) went down to Egypt, because they are not enumerated here. In Vayikra Rabbah 4:6 I found the following: When he left Canaan (cf. Genesis 36:6) Esau's family consisted of only six (himself and his five sons), and Scripture calls them "the souls of his house" (in the plural) and this is because they worshipped many gods (each serving a different god and having as it were, a different soul or religious feeling). But the family of Jacob when he came to Egypt consisted of seventy and Scripture calls them "soul", in the singular, because they all served One God.

Verse 27

Verse 28

להורת לפניו TO DIRECT HIM — Render this as the Targum does: to prepare a place for him and to show him how he should settle in it.
לפניו BEFORE HIM — means before he should arrive there. A Midrashic comment is: להורת לפניו (in the sense of, "that there might be teaching before him") — to establish for him a House of Study from which Teaching (תורה or הוראה) might go forth (Genesis Rabbah 95:3).

Verse 29

ויאסר יוסף מרכבתו AND JOSEPH MADE READY (literally, bound, harnessed) HIS CHARIOT — He himself harnessed the horses to the chariot being eager to show honour to his father (Genesis Rabbah 95:8; Mechilta to בשלח).
וירא אליו AND HE APPEARED BEFORE HIM — Joseph appeared before his father.
ויבך על צואריו עוד AND WEPT ON HIS NECK A GOOD WHILE — The phrase ויבך עוד signifies weeping copiously. So, too, עוד has the same meaning in (Job 34:23) "For He doth not place upon a man עוד" — which means something more than is proper: God does not place on him accusations additional to his sins (the sins he has really committed) Here, also, he

wept greatly and continuously — more than is usual. Jacob, however, did not fall upon Joseph's neck nor did he kiss him. Our Rabbis say: the reason was that he was reciting the Shema (renewing his allegiance to God immediately on settling in a new land).

Verse 30

אמותה הפעם NOW, I WILL FAIN DIE — It's literal meaning is as the Targum renders it. A Midrashic explanation is (being based upon the literal translation. "I will die this once"): I had thought that I would die two deaths, in this world and also in the world to come, because the Divine Presence departed from me and I therefore thought that God would hold me responsible for your death. Now, since you are alive I will die only once, in this world (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayigash 9).

Verse 31

ואמרה אליו אחי וגו' AND I WILL SAY TO HIM— "MY BRETHREN … have come unto me" and further I will say to him, והאנשים רעי צאן וגו' AND THE MEN ARE SHEPHERDS etc.

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

בעבור תשבו בארץ גשן IN ORDER THAT YE MAY ABIDE IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN — and this is the land that you require, for it is a land of pasture. If you tell him that you are inexperienced in other work he will send you far away from him and settle you there.
כי תועבת מצרים כל רעה צאן FOR EVERY SHEPHERD IS AN ABOMINATION TO THE EGYPTIANS — because they (sheep) are regarded by them as deities.

Chapter 47

Verse 1

Verse 2

ומקצה אחיו SOME OF HIS BRETHREN — Some of the inferior ones amongst them as to strength — of those who did not look robust. For should Pharaoh find them to be robust men he might press them for military service. The weaker brethren were as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Issachar and Benjamin, and it was they whose names Moses did not repeat when he blessed them. But the names of the strong ones he mentioned twice: (Deuteronomy 33:7) "And this is for Judah... hear, Eternal, the voice of Judah"; (Deuteronomy 33:20) "And of Gad he said, Blessed he lie that extendeth Gad"; (Deuteronomy 33:25) "And of Naphtali he said, Naphtali..." (Deuteronomy 33:22). "And of Dan he said Dan. ..", and in like manner he repeated the names of Zebulun (Deuteronomy 33:18) and of Asher (Deuteronomy 33:24). This is the version of Genesis Rabbah 95:4

which is a Palestinian Agada. But in our Babylonian Talmud we find that those whose names Moses mentioned twice were the weaker of the brethren and it was these whom he (Joseph) brought before Pharaoh. But six are enumerated above as having their names mentioned twice and he brought only five before Pharaoh. The explanation is that it is true that Judah's name is mentioned twice, but it is mentioned twice not because he was one of the weaker brethren, but there is another reason for this, as is stated in Bava Kamma 92a. In the Baraitha of Siphre on וזאת הברכה we have the same version as in our Babylonian Talmud.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

אנשי חיל MEN OF ACTIVITY — skilled in their occupation of tending sheep.
על אשר לי OVER THAT WHICH IS MINE — over my sheep.

Verse 7

ויברך יעקב AND JACOB BLESSED — this was the greeting of peace, as is usual in the case of all who are granted an interview with kings at long intervals; saluer in old French

Verse 8

Verse 9

שני מגורי — means the days of my being a stranger. All my days I have been a stranger in other peoples' lands.
ולא השיגו AND THEY HAVE NOT ATTAINED so far as happiness is concerned.

Verse 10

ויברך יעקב AND JACOB BLESSED [PHARAOH] — i.e. he gave him the salutation of peace as is usual for all who take their leave of princes — they salute them and depart. A Midrash however understands this more literally and asks, "What was the blessing with which he blessed him? That the waters of the Nile might rise at his approach Because Egypt does not drink (is not irrigated by) rain-water, but the waters of the Nile rise and irrigate it. And from the time when Jacob blessed him and henceforth, whenever Pharaoh came to the Nile it rose at his coming, overflowed its banks and watered the land. Thus it is stated in Tanchuma Yashan 4:2:26 to נשא.

Verse 11

רעמסס RAMESES — This is part the land of Goshen.

Verse 12

לפי הטף ACCORDING TO THEIR LITTLE ONES — according to the requirements of all their household.

Verse 13

ולחם אין בכל הארץ AND THERE WAS NO BREAD IN ALL THE LAND — Scripture reverts now to the original subject, viz, to the account of the beginning of the years of famine.
ותלה AND FAINTED — This is the same as ותלאה, it means to be wearied, as the Targum renders it. Another example of the root is (Proverbs 26:18) "Like one fatigued who casteth fire-brands".

Verse 14

בשבר אשר הם שוברים FOR THE CORN WHICH THEY BOUGHT — they gave him the money.

Verse 15

אפס — Render this as the Targum does: שלים IS AT AN END.

Verse 16

Verse 17

וינהלם — is the same as וינהגם AND HE GUIDED, LED THEM. Similar in meaning are (Isaiah 51:18) "There is none (מנהל) to lead her", and (Psalms 23) "he guideth me (ינהלני) beside the still waters."

Verse 18

בשנה השנית IN THE SECOND YEAR — of the famine.
כי אם תם הכסף וגו' is the same as כי אשר תם הכסף and the meaning is: but (כי) it is a fact that (אשר) the money and the herds of cattle are exhausted, and everything has now come into my lord's hands.
בלתי אם גויתנו is the same as [NOTHING REMAINS] IF IT BE NOT OUR BODIES.

Verse 19

ותן זרע GIVE US SEED — to sow in the ground. Although Joseph had said (Genesis 45:6) "And there are yet five years when there will be no plowing and sowing", as soon as Jacob came to Egypt a blessing came with his arrival: they began to sow and the famine came to an end. Thus do we read in the Tosefta of Sotah (Tosefta Sotah 10:3).
לא תשם means it shall not be desolate. The Targum renders it by לא תבור shall not be uncultivated, which has the same meaning as (Mishnah Peah 2:1) שדה בור an uncultivated field — one which is not ploughed.

Verse 20

ותהי הארץ לפרעה SO THE LAND BECAME PHARAOH'S — possessed by him.

Verse 21

ואת העם העביר AND AS FOR THE PEOPLE HE CAUSED THEM TO PASS — Joseph caused them to pass from one city to another city that they might be

reminded that they now had no claim to the land. He settled the people of one city in another. There was no need for Scripture to state this except for the purpose of telling you something to Joseph's credit — that he intended thereby to remove a reproach from his brothers because, since the Egyptians were themselves strangers in the various cities where they then dwelt, they could not call them (Joseph's brethren) strangers (Chullin 60b).
'מקצה גבול מצרים וגו means thus did he to all the cities of the realm of Egypt FROM ONE EXTREMITY OF THE BOUNDARIES OF EGYPT EVEN TO THE OTHER EXTREMITY THEREOF).

Verse 22

הכהנים mean THE PRIESTS. The term כהן always means one who ministers to Deity except in those cases where it denotes one of high rank, e.g. (Exodus 2:16) "Jethro the chief of (כהן) Midian" and (Genesis 41:45) "the chief of (כהן) On").
חק לכהנים [FOR] THE PRIESTS HAD A PORTION — an assigned portion of a definite quantity of bread daily.

Verse 23

הא means the same as הנה "behold", as (Ezekiel 16:43) "I also lo, (הא) will recompense thy way upon thine head".

Verse 24

לזרע השדה FOR SEED OF THE FIELD — for sowing every year),
ולאשר בבתיכם AND FOR THEM OF YOUR HOUSEHOLDS — means and as food for the servants and maidservants that are in your houses,
טפכם means your young children.

Verse 25

נמצא חן LET US FIND FAVOUR — [IN THE EYES OF MY LORD] in that you should do for us as you have said.
והיינו עבדים לפרעה AND WE SHALL BE PHARAOH'S SERVANTS, paying him this tax annually.

Verse 26

לחק AS A STATUTE — without repeal.

Verse 27

וישב ישראל בארץ מצרים AND ISRAEL ABODE IN THE LAND OF EGYPT — and where in the land of Egypt? בארץ גשן IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN which is a part of the land Egypt.
ויאחזו בה means THEY ACQUIRED POSSESSIONS.

Verse 28

ויחי יעקב AND JACOB LIVED — Why is this section (Sidra) totally closed? Because, comprising as it does an account of the death of Jacob, as soon as our father Jacob departed this life the hearts and eyes of Israel were closed (their eyes became dim and their hearts troubled) because of the misery of the bondage which they then began to impose upon them. Another reason is: because he (Jacob) wished to reveal to his sons the date of the End of Days (i.e. when Israel's exile would finally end; cf. Rashi on

Genesis 49:1), but the vision was closed (concealed) from him (Genesis Rabbah 96:1).

Verse 29

ויקרבו ימי ישראל למות AND WHEN THE DAYS OF ISRAEL S DEATH APPROACHED — Everyone of whom it is stated that his days drew near to die did not attain to the age of his fathers (Genesis Rabbah 76:3). Some editions add: Isaac lived 180 years, whereas Jacob lived only 147. Similarly it is said in the case of David, "his days drew near" and he lived 70 years, whereas his father reached the age of eighty.
ויקרא לבנו ליוסף AND HE CALLED HIS SON JOSEPH — he called that one who had the power in his hands to do what he was about to ask (Genesis Rabbah 96:3).
שים נא ידך PUT, I PRAY THEE, THY HAND — and take an oath.
חסד ואמת MERCY AND TRUTH — The mercy shown to the dead is "mercy of truth" (true, disinterested kindness) since one cannot hope for any reward (Genesis Rabbah 96:5).
אל נא תקברני במצרים BURY ME NOT, I PRAY THEE, IN EGYPT — Because its soil will ultimately become lice which would swarm beneath my body. Further, those who die outside the Land of Israel will not live again at the Resurrection except after the pain caused by the body rolling through underground-passages until it reaches the Holy Land) And another reason is that the Egyptians should not make me (my corpse or my tomb) the object of idolatrous worship (Genesis Rabbah 76:3).

Verse 30

ושכבתי עם אבתי BUT I WILL LIE WITH MY FATHERS — This ו of ושכבתי is the connecting link with the beginning of the verse above: Put thy hand beneath my thigh and swear unto me that you will not bury me in Egypt. For I must ultimately lie with my fathers (i.e. die as all my fathers have died) and you shall carry me out of Egypt. One cannot say that "I will lie with my fathers" means "make me lie with my fathers in the cave" (i.e. bury me), for immediately after this it is written "And thou shalt carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place". Further we find that wherever the term "lying with one's fathers" is used it denotes dying and not burial. For instance, (1 Kings 2:10) "and David lay with his fathers", and afterwards it states "and he was buried in the city of David".

Verse 31

וישתחו ישראל AND ISRAEL PROSTRATED HIMSELF — The proverb says: Though the lion is king "when the fox has his time, bow to him" (Megillah 16b).
על ראש המטה UPON THE BED'S HEAD — He turned towards the Divine Presence (the Shechinah) (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 3). They (the Rabbis) inferred from this that the Shechinah is above the pillow of a sick person (Shabbat 12b). Another interpretation of על ראש המטה He bowed himself in thanks FOR HIM WHO WAS THE CHIEF (ראש) OF HIS CHILDREN — in thanks because his children were heart-whole with God, and none of them was wicked, for even Joseph who was a king and moreover had been a captive amongst heathen peoples yet maintained his righteousness (Sifré ואתחנן 31).

Chapter 48

Verse 1

ויאמר ליוסף literally, HE SAID TO JOSEPH — "he" means one of the messengers: it is an elliptical phrase. Some say, that Ephraim was regularly with Jacob for study and when Jacob became ill in the land of Goshen Ephraim went to his father in Egypt and reported it to him (Tanchuma 1:12:6).
ויקח את שני בניו עמו AND HE TOOK HIS TWO SONS WITH HIM — so that Jacob would bless them before his death.

Verse 2

ויגד literally, AND HE TOLD — "he" means the messenger whoever it was — TO JACOB. It does not state plainly who told it; there are many such elliptical verses
ויתחזק ישראל AND ISRAEL STRENGTHENED HIMSELF — he said, "Although he is my son, he is a king, and I will do honour to him" (Midrash Tanchuma, Bo 6). From this we may infer that we must show honour to a person of royal rank (Cf. Menachot 98a). Similarly, Moses showed honour to the king when he said, (Exodus 11:8) "And all these, thy servants, shall come down to me" (which was only a polite way of saying. "Thou, thyself, wilt be forced to come down to me"); so, too, did Elijah: (1 Kings 18:46) "and he girded up his loins [and ran before Ahab] etc." (Midrash Tanchuma, Bo 7)

Verse 3

Verse 4

ונתתיך לקהל עמים AND I WILL MAKE OF THEE AN ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLES — He announced to me that there were yet to issue from me an assembly of peoples (i.e. at least two more tribes). Now, it is true that He then said to me, (Genesis 35:11) "A nation and an assembly of nations [shall be of thee]", but when He said "a nation" He intended it to refer to Benjamin who was not yet born, and this promise of "a nation" has been fulfilled by the birth of Benjamin, and for that reason I do not mention it now. "An assembly of nations [shall be of thee]", however, presupposes that two more would descend from me besides Benjamin. Consequently, since no other son besides Benjamin was born to me, He was really telling me that one of my tribes (i.e. the tribe formed by one of my sons) would be divided so as to constitute at least two tribes, thus giving that son more importance, and that privilege I confer upon you (Genesis Rabbah 82:4; Pesikta Rabbati 3).

Verse 5

הנולדים לך עד באי אליך literally, WHO WERE BORN TO THEE. .. UNTIL I CAME TO THEE, i.e. before I came to thee. It signifies as much as: WHO WERE BORN from the time when you left me UNTIL THE TIME WHEN I CAME TO YOU.
לי הם THEY SHALL BE MINE — they shall be counted amongst my other sons, to receive a portion in the Land each for himself (i.e. each to have his own territory exactly as each of my other sons has).
לי הם THEY SHALL BE MINE — they shall be counted amongst my other sons, to receive a portion in the Land each for himself (i.e. each to have his own territory exactly as each of my other sons has).

Verse 6

Although the Land was divided according to the number of heads — as it is written, (Numbers 26:54) "To the more numerous thou shalt give a larger

inheritance" — and each person had an equal share except those who were first-born sons (and these received a double share), yet only these of Joseph's sons bore the name of "tribe" when it became a matter of casting lots for the partition of the land according to the number of the tribes (cf. Numbers 26:55), and of appointing princes to the various tribes and of assigning banners to each of them.

Verse 7

ואני בבאי מפדן וגו' AND AS FOR ME, WHEN I CAME FROM PADAN etc. — "And although I trouble you to take me for burial into the land of Canaan and I did not do this for your mother (i.e., I did not take the trouble to bury her in a place other than that in which she died, which was by the road-side) which I might easily have done since she died quite close to Bethlehem".
כברת ארץ is a measure of land equal to 2000 cubits which is the extent of a Sabbath day's journey. This is according to the statement of R. Moses the Expositor. — "Do not imagine that it was the rains which prevented me from bringing her to Hebron for burial. It was the dry season when the ground is riddled and full of holes like a sieve (כברה).
ואקברה שם AND I BURIED HERE THERE and did not carry her even the short distance to Bethlehem to bring her into a city. I know that in your heart you feel some resentment against me. Know, however, that I buried her there by the command of God". And the future proved that God had commanded him to do this in order that she might help her children when Nebuzaradan would take them into captivity. For when.they were passing along that road Rachel came forth from her grave and stood by her tomb weeping and beseeching mercy for them, as it is said, (Jeremiah 31:15) "A voice is heard in Rama, [the sound of weeping … Rachel weeping for her children]", and the Holy One, blessed be He, replied to her (v. 16) "There is a reward for thy work, says the Lord etc. (v. 17) for thy children will return to their own border". Onkelos translated it (כברת ארץ) by כרוב ארעא which is a full measure of one day's ploughing. I am of opinion that they had a definite measure which they called "one full furrow"; old French cordié. So we say, (Bava Metzia 107a) "He ploughs (כריב) and ploughs again", and (Yoma 43b) "as much earth as a fox carries on its feet from a ploughed field (בי כרבא)."

Verse 8

וירא ישראל את בני יוסף AND ISRAEL SAW JOSEPH'S SONS — he wished to bless them but the Divine Presence departed from him because he saw that from Ephraim would be born the wicked kings Jeroboam and Ahab, and from Manasseh Jehu and his sous (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 6).
ויאמר מי אלה AND HE SAID "WHO ARE THESE?" — Whence come these who are unfitted for blessing?

Verse 9

בָּזֶה IN THIS PLACE (literally, by this, or by means of this) — He showed him the contract of betrothal and the contract of marriage (evidence that their mother had adopted the faith of Israel, and that his and her offspring were of their faith) and Joseph prayed to God about the matter and the Holy Spirit again rested upon him (Jacob) (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 6).
ויאמר קחם נא אלי ואברכם AND HE SAID, BRING THEM, I PRAY THEE, UNTO ME, AND I WILL BLESS THEM — It is to this that the text alludes, (Hosea 11:3) "And I, תרגלתי לאפרים taking them (קחם) upon his arms", meaning, I made My Spirit once again a familiar thing (תרגלתי) in Jacob for Ephraim's

sake until he took them (him and Manasseh) upon his arms (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 6).

Verse 10

Verse 11

לא פללתי I HAD NOT CONTEMPLATED — I had never dared to cherish the thought that I would again see your face. פללתי is an expression for thinking, like the noun in (Isaiah 16:3) "Give counsel, carry out the thought (פלילה)".

Verse 12

ויוצא יוסף אתם AND JOSEPH BROUGHT THEM OUT — After he (Jacob) had kissed them, Joseph brought them out from between his knees in order to place them one at the right and the other on the left in order that Jacob might thus lay his hands upon them and bless them
וישתחו לאפיו AND HE PROSTRATED HIMSELF BEFORE HIS FACE — after he had stepped backwards from before his father.

Verse 13

את אפרים בימינו משמאל ישראל EPHRAIM ON HIS RIGHT HAND TOWARDS ISRAEL'S LEFT — If one is moving towards another person his right hand is opposite the other's left. Now since he (Manasseh) was the first-born he was marked out for the blessing and should have been placed at Jacob's right hand.

Verse 14

שכל את ידיו PLACING HIS HANDS DESIGNEDLY — Understand this as the Targum renders it: אחכמינון he put wisdom into them (viz., into his hands), meaning designedly and wisely he moved his hands for this purpose, intelligently and with full knowledge, for he knew that Manasseh was the first-born and yet he did not place his right hand upon him.

Verse 15

Verse 16

המלאך הגאל אתי THE ANGEL REDEEMING ME — The angel who was usually sent to me in my trouble, as it is said, (Genesis 31:11) "And the angel of God said unto me in the dream: Jacob etc. … (Genesis 31:13), I am the God of Beth-el."
יברך את הנערים SHALL BLESS THE LADS — viz, Manasseh and Ephraim.
וידגו AND LET THEM INCREASE — like fishes (דגים) which are fruitful and which multiply and which the evil eye cannot effect (Berakhot 20a).

Verse 17

ויתמך יד אביו; HE HELD UP HIS FATHER'S HAND — He lifted it up from his son's head and upheld it in his hand to remove it etc.

Verse 18

Verse 19

ידעתי בני ידעתי I KNOW IT, MY SON, I KNOW that he is the first-born.
גם הוא יהיה לעם וגם הוא יגדל HE ALSO SHALL BECOME A PEOPLE, AND HE ALSO SHALL BE GREAT, for of him will be born Gideon through whom the Holy One, blessed be He, will perform a miracle (See Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 6).
ואולם אחיו הקטן יגדל ממנו BUT TRULY HIS YOUNGER BROTHER SHALL BE GREATER THAN HE — for of him will be born Joshua who will make Israel inherit the land of Canaan and will instruct them in the Torah (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 6).
וזרעו יהיה מלא הגוים AND HIS SEED SHALL BECOME A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS (more lit, shall fill the nations) — the fame and renown of his seed, Joshua, will spread abroad and fill the whole world when he will make the sun stand still upon Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Aijalon (Avodah Zarah 25a).

Verse 20

בך יברך ישראל IN THEE SHALL ISRAEL BLESS — When one wishes to bless his sons he will bless them by reciting the formula with which they were blessed — a man will say to his son, "God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh."
וישם את אפרים AND HE PUT EPHRAIM etc. — i.e. in the blessing he bestowed upon them he put Ephraim's name before that of Manasseh, so giving him precedence over his brother when the Israelites encamped and marched beneath their banners in the wilderness (cf. Numbers 2:18 and Numbers 10:22), and when at the dedication of the altar by the princes of the tribes each brought his gifts (cf. Numbers 7:48 Numbers 7:54). (see Genesis Rabbah 97:5).

Verse 21

Verse 22

ואני נתתי לך MOREOVER I HAVE GIVEN TO THEE — Because you will take the trouble to engage in my burial "I" give you an inheritance in which you will be buried. And which was this? Shechem, as it is said, (Joshua 24:32) "And the bones of Joseph which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem".
שכם אחד על אחיך Jacob meant by the word שכם the actual city of Shechem and said: this shall be to you one portion additional to what you will receive together with your brothers.
בחרבי ובקשתי WITH MY SWORD AND WITH MY BOW — When Simeon and Levi slew the inhabitants of Shechem all the surrounding nations gathered together to join in battle against them and Jacob girded on his weapons to war against them (cf. Genesis Rabbah 80:10) Another explanation of this verse: שכם אחד ONE PORTION [ABOVE THY BRETHREN] — this refers to the birthright (Genesis Rabbah 97:6): that Joseph's children should receive two portions when Canaan would be divided amongst the tribes (cf. Deuteronomy 60:17; Joseph therefore was to be regarded as the first-born). The word שכם signifies portion. "For thou wilt make them שכם" i.e. thou wilt place my enemies before me in portions (thou wilt scatter them before me); (Deuteronomy 60:8) "I will divide שכם the portion"; (Hosea 6:9) "on the way they murder שכמה" i.e. each man kills someone as his own portion; (Zephaniah 3:9) "to serve him as though they were all but one portion (שכם)" i.e. to serve him unitedly.

אשר לקחתי מיד האמרי WHICH I TOOK OUT OF THE HAND OF THE AMORITE—out of the hand of Esau whose deeds were like those of an Amorite (Genesis Rabbah 97:6). Another interpretation of אמורי in reference to Esau is: he used to ensnare his father by the words (אמרי) of his mouth (cf. Rashi on Genesis 25:7).
בחרבי ובקשתי that is, by means of his spiritual weapons: his wisdom and his prayer ("בְּקָשָׁתִי" cf. The Targumim and Bava Batra 123a).

Chapter 49

Verse 1

ואגידה לכם THAT I MAY TELL YOU — He wished to reveal to them the end of Israel's exile but the Shechinah departed from him and he began to speak of other things (Genesis Rabbah 98:2).

Verse 2

Verse 3

וראשית אוני THE BEGINNING OF MY VIGOR — That is the first drop [of semen], as he had not experienced a seminal emission from all of his days [until that time] (Genesis Rabbah 98:4).
אוני means MY VIGOR, as (Hosea 12:9) "I have gained me (און) strength"; (Isaiah 40:26) "by the greatness of His (אונים) might"; (Isaiah 5:29) "and to him that hath no (אונים) might Ho increaseth strength".
יתר שאת SUPERIORITY IN DIGNITY — Since you were the first-born it was proper that you should be superior to your brothers by being endowed with the priesthood. This term שאת "lifting up" alludes to the נשיאות כפים the raising of the hands when the priests pronounce the benediction (cf. Onkelos).
ויתר עז SUPERIORITY IN POWER — meaning in royal rank, as is meant by עז in (1 Samuel 2:10) "And he will give strength (עז) unto His king". And what caused you to lose all these?

Verse 4

פחז כמים The impetuosity and the precipitance with which you so hastily showed your wrath, just like water that rushes headlong in its course — therefore
אל תותר THOU SHALT NOT BE SUPERIOR— you will not receive all these many prerogatives that were proper to you. And what was this impetuosity which you displayed?
כי עלית משכבי אביך, אז חללת BECAUSE THOU WENTEST UP TO THY FATHER S PLACE OF REPOSE; THEN PROFANEDST THOU Him Who hovered over my couch — the Name of the Shechina that used to abide above my couch (Shabbat 55b and Rashi there).
פַּחַז is a noun (a segolate noun like נָחָל) and has its accent therefore on the first syllable, and the entire word (both syllables) is punctuated with Patach, for were it the past tense of a verb, half of it (the first syllable) would have been punctuated with Kametz and the other half with Patach, and its accent would have been on the last syllable.
יצועי denotes a couch, because it is spread (root יצע) with mattresses and sheets; it occurs in this sense frequently in Scripture: (Psalms 132:3) "Nor go up into the bed that is spread for me (ערש יצועי)" ; (Psalms 63:7) "When I remember thee upon my (יצועי) couch".

Verse 5

שמעון ולוי אחים SIMEON AND LEVI WERE BRETHREN in the plot against Shechem and against Joseph. Scripture states, (Genesis 37:19—20) "And they said one to another… (literally, one to his brother) come now therefore and let us slay him" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 9). Now, who were these? Should you say Reuben or Judah was one of them — but they were not consenting parties to slaying him (cf. Genesis 37:21, Genesis 37:22 and Genesis 37:26). Should you say they were the sons of the handmaids (Dan, Naphtali, Gad or Asher) — their hatred of Joseph was not so perfect a hatred that they would wish to kill him for it is said, (Genesis 37:2) "whilst a lad he used to be with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah etc." Issachar and Zebulun would certainly not have spoken thus in the presence of their elder brothers. Consequently one must needs say that they were Simeon and Levi whom their father called "brethren" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 9).

כלי חמס INSTRUMENTS OF VIOLENCE (חמס may mean something that has been usurped from another) — This business of murdering is חמס, not rightly theirs; it is part of the blessing conferred upon Esau; it is his business and you have usurped (חמסתם) it from him (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 9).

מכרתיהם denotes weapons. In the Greek language the word for a sword is μάχαιρα (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 9). Another interpretation of מכרתיהם is: (taking מכרתיהם as מגרתיהם their sojournings with an interchange of כ and ג) in the land of their sojournings they got into the habit of using weapons of violence, מכרתיהם being of the same root as (Ezekiel 16:3) "Thine habitation (מכרתיך) and thy nativity [is in the land of the Canaanite]." This is how Onkelos renders it.

Verse 6

בסדם אל תבא נפשי O MY SOUL, COME NOT THOU INTO THEIR SECRET DELIBERATION (סוד may have the sense of plot) — this has reference to the story of Zimri, (Numbers 25:6-15) when the tribe of Simeon assembled and brought the Midianitish woman before Moses, saying, "Is this woman forbidden or permitted to be taken as a wife? If you say she is forbidden, who made the daughter of Jethro permissible to you in marriage" (See Sanhedrin 82b) — let not my name be mentioned in connection with that event! Indeed, it is said (Numbers 25:14) "Zimri, the son of Zalu, a prince of a father's house among the Simeonites" — but Scripture does not state "a son of Jacob".

בקהלם UNTO THEIR ASSEMBLY — when Korah of the tribe of Levi will assemble the entire congregation against Moses and Aaron —

אל תחד כבודי MY GLORY BE NOT THOU UNITED — let my name not be associated there with them! (Genesis Rabbah 98:5) And so it was, for it is said (Numbers 16:1) "Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath. the son of Levi" — but it does not say "the son of Jacob". In Chronicles, however, (1 Chronicles 6:22,23), where the genealogy of Korah is traced in connection with the "Duchan" (properly, the platform — the place on which the Levites were stationed for the service of song in the Temple) it is said, "the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel (Genesis Rabbah 98:5).

אל תחד כבדי MY GLORY BE NOT THOU UNITED — כבוד is masculine and therefore you must needs explain the phrase as though he were addressing himself to "the glory" saying, "thou, my glory, be not united with them!" תחד is exactly the same grammatical form (2nd masc. sing. and not 3rd fem. sing.) as (Isaiah 14:20) "Thou shall not be united (אל תחד) with them in burial"

כי באפם הרגו איש FOR IN THEIR WRATH THEY SLEW A MAN — This refers to Hamor and the people of Shechem, and they are spoken of as איש "one" man because they were all regarded as of no more account than one man when it was a matter of attacking them. It likewise states in the history of Gideon, (Judges 6:16) "And thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man", and similarly concerning Egypt, (Exodus 15:1) "The horse (singular) and its rider (singular) hath he thrown into the sea" (i.e. the whole army as though it consisted of but one horse and its rider). This is a Midrashic interpretation (Genesis Rabbah 99:6). The plain meaning of the use of the singular form is: a group of men is called "a man" having in mind each one separately, so that the meaning is: they slew every man with whom they were angry. Similar is (Ezekiel 19:3) "and he learned to catch the prey, he devoured (אדם) a man" (which is the same as בני אדם "men")
וברצונם עקרו שור AND IN THEIR SELFWILL THEY LAMED AN OX — they desired to exterminate Joseph who is called שור, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 33:17) "His firstling bullock (שורו) (Joseph), majesty is his". עקרו means in old French essarter. It has the same meaning as in (Joshua 11:6) "Thou shalt hamstring (תעקר) their horses".

Verse 7

ארור אפם כי עז CURSED BE TIIEIR WRATH, FOR IT IS POWERFUL — Even when he was reproving them he did not curse them but their anger. That is what Balaam said: (Numbers 23:8) "How can I curse them since אל hath not cursed them?" (Genesis Rabbah 99:6)
אחלקם ביעקב I WILL DIVIDE THEM IN JACOB — I shall separate them from each other inasmuch as Levi shall not be numbered among the tribes (cf. Numbers 26:62) and thus they (Simeon and Levi) will be divided (cf. Genesis Rabbah 98:5). Another interpretation is: both of these tribes will be dispersed in Israel, and this happened, for you will find that the very poor — the Scribes and elementary teachers — were all of the tribe of Simeon, and this was so in order that this tribe should be dispersed, since such poor people must wander from city to city to eke out a livelihood. As for the tribe of Levi, He made them travel round from one threshing floor to another to collect their heave offerings and tithes; thus He caused them also to be "scattered" but in a more respectable manner (Genesis Rabbah 99:6).

Verse 8

יהודה אתה יודוך אחיך THOU JUDAH, THY BRETHREN SHALL PRAISE THEE — Because he rebuked the first three tribes in harsh terms Judah began to move away that he (Jacob) should not censure him for the incident with Tamar; Jacob therefore recalled him with words that would soothe him: Judah, you are not like these! — you your brethren may indeed praise (Genesis Rabbah 99:5).
ידך בערף איביך THY HAND IS ON THE NECK OF THINE ENEMIES — a prophecy fulfilled in the days of David, a descendant of Judah, who said (2 Samuel 22:41) "Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their back unto me" (Genesis Rabbah 99:8). (The Hebrew may signify, "Thou hast given me my enemies' necks")
בני אביך THY FATHER'S CHILDREN — Because they were born of different wives he did not say "thy mother's children" as Isaac said (Genesis Rabbah 99:8). (He meant: all thy brothers will bow down to thee. Had he said "thy mother's children", he would have included only Judah's brothers who were born of the same mother as himself.)

Verse 9

גור אריה A YOUNG LION — He prophesied this with reference to David who, when he began his military career, was but as a whelp — as it states, (2 Samuel 5:2) "when Saul was king over us it was thou that didst lead out and bring in Israel" — but who later on became as a lion when they made him king over themselves. That is what Onkelos means by translating it "A ruler he shall he בשרויא" — at the beginning
מטרף FROM THE PREY (literally, tearing) — From the deed of which I suspected you when I said (Genesis 37:33) "Joseph is torn in pieces, an evil beast hath devoured him" — and by that Judah was meant who was likened to a lion —
בני עלית THOU WENTEST UP, O MY SON — from that murderous deed you withdrew saying, (Genesis. 5:26) "what profit is it if we slay our brother", and similarly did he act when Tamar was condemned to death, for he said "She is righteous: mine is the blame" (cf. Rashi on Genesis 38:26), therefore as a reward כרע רבץ HE STOOPED DOWN, HE CROUCHED etc. — as we are told of the days of Solomon (1 Kings 5:5) "[Israel dwelt safely] every man under his vine etc." (Genesis Rabbah 99:8).

Verse 10

לא יסור שבט מיהודה THE SCEPTRE SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH — Even after the house of David ceases to reign. For this refers to the Chiefs of the Exile in Babylon who ruled over the people with the rod (שבט) having been appointed by the government (Sanhedrin 5a; Horayot 11b).
ומחוקק מבין רגליו AND THE LAWGIVER FROM BETWEEN HIS FEET — This refers to the scholars of the Torah: the Princes of the Land of Israel (as Hillel and his descendants who were Heads of Schools only and had no political power) (Sanhedrin 5a; Horayot 11b).
עד כי יבא שילה means until the King Messiah will come, whose will be the kingdom (Genesis Rabbah 99:8). Thus too does Onkelos render it. A Midrashic interpretation is: שילה is the same as שי לו, a present unto him, as it is said, (Psalms 76:12) "Let them bring (שי) presents unto him that is to be feared."
ולו יקהת עמים means AND UNTO HIM [SHALL BE] AN ASSEMBLAGE OF PEOPLES. יקהת is a noun from the root יקה and is not a verbal form although it has the appearance of one, for the י is one of the root-letters as it is in the word יפעתך (Ezekiel 21:20) "thy brightness" from root יפע, only that it is sometimes omitted. There are many root-letters that are subject to this rule and are known as עיקר נופל (root-letters that may be omitted) as, for example, the נ of נוגף and of נושך and the א of אחותי in (Job 13:17) ואחותי באזניכם (where the root is חוה) "and let my declaration be in your ears", and the אבחת of א in the phrase (Ezekiel 21:20) אבחת חרב "the point of the sword", or the א in אסוך in the phrase (2 Kings 4:2) (אסוך שמן) (root סוך) "a pot of oil". So, too, here, ויקהת a noun (from a root קָהָה to assemble, as שמחה the construct of which is שמחת from שמח) — an assembly of nations. And so it is actually said with reference to the Messiah, (Isaiah 11:10) "Unto him shall the nations seek". Of similar meaning is the word יקהת in (Proverbs 30:17) "the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth ליקהת אם i.e. despiseth "the gathering of wrinkles in the mother's face" (due to old age). In the Talmud we find a similar meaning of the root.יקה: "they sat and gathered assemblies (ומקהו אקהתא) in the streets of Nehardea" (Tr. Yevamot 110b). It could have also said קהיית instead of יקהת.

Verse 11

אסרי לגפן עירה BINDING UNTO THE VINE HIS FOAL — He (Jacob) prophesied of the land of Judah that it would run with wine like a fountain: the vines will be so productive that a man of Judah will bind to a vine one foal

and he will fully load it with the grapes of only one vine, and from the produce of only one branch he would load one ass's colt.
שרקה means a long branch; corière in old French
כבס ביין HE WASHED IN WINE — all these phrases indicate abundance of wine.
סותה denotes a kind of vesture, but there is no other example of the word in Scripture.
אסרי is the same as אוסר (i.e. the yod is redundant). Similar forms are: (Psalms 113:7) "who raiseth (מקימי instead of מקים) the poor out of the dust", (Psalms 5:1) "that art enthroned" (היושבי instead of היושב) in the heavens". In the same way is בני אתנו (instead of בן אתנו) to be explained. Onkelos translates v.11 as having reference to King Messiah: גפן "the vine" symbolizes "Israel" (cf. Psalms 80:9): "Thou didst pluck up a vine out of Egypt"); עירה (taken as עיר city with the ה suffix instead of ו, like סותה instead of סותו in thin verse) means Jerusalem; שורקה alludes to Israel as the prophet exclaims (Jeremiah 2:21) "Yet, I had planted thee a noble vine (שורק)".
בני אתנו Onkelos translates by: they will build His Temple (איתנו), connecting this word with the expression שער האיתן "The gate of the entrance" of the Temple mentioned in the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 40:15). He further renders it in another manner, namely: גפן the vine represents the righteous; בני אתנו he paraphrases by: who occupy themselves with the Torah by teaching it" — with an allusion to the idea expressed in (Judges 5:10) "Ye that ride on white asses (אתונות)" (cf. Eruvin 54b, where this is referred to the scholars who ride from city to city and from district to district to teach the Law, thus making the explanation of the Torah shining-white as is the light at noon-day; cf. also the Targum on this verse).
The words כבס ביין he renders by "their garments will be of fine purple" — resembling wine in colour. The word צבעונין "coloured garments" in the Targum is the rendering of סותה — for a woman attires herself in these to entice men to take notice of her (so that the word denotes a garment that attracts notice to its wearer, being a noun formed from the root סות, to entice or allure). Our Rabbis, too, explained this word (סותה) in the Talmud (Ketubot 111b) in the sense of allurement — the allurement of intoxication: they say, "And as for the wine in question, perhaps you will say that it cannot intoxicate — remember that Scripture says of it סותה "its allurement" (i.e. it has an allurement so that people drink more and more of it).

Verse 12

חכלילי [HIS EYES] ARE RED — חכלילי denotes redness, as the Targum renders it: they shall become red. Similar is (Proverbs 23:29) "who hath redness (חכלילות) of eyes?" Redness of eyes is associated with wine because that is what usually happens to those who drink much wine — their eyes become red.
מחלב [AND THE WHITENESS OF HIS TEETH IS] FROM MILK— because of abundance of milk, for there will be in his land good pasture for herds of flock. The verse is therefore to be explained as follows: There will be redness of eyes because of abundance of wine and there will be whiteness of teeth because of abundance of milk (the ם of מיין and מחלב is not the מ comparativum: "His eyes shall be redder than wine etc."). According to the Targum עינים means mountains which are called thus because from thence as a point of observation one can see afar off (i.e. it translates by "the mountains are red with wine"). He (Onkelos) further translates the verse in a different way, taking עינים in the sense of fountains and continuous flow of the wine-press. The word נעווהי which Onkelos uses signifies his wine-presses. It is an Aramaic word that occurs in (Avodah Zarah 74b): "as for a tank (נעוא), cleanse it with hot water". (The

translation of the Targum is therefore: "His vats will stream with wine".) The words יחורון בקעתה his valleys (the places wore mountains are, as it wore, cloven, בקע) are the Targum of שנים [לבן], taking the second word in the sense of שני הסלעים rocky crags (cf. 1 Samuel 14:4 and Rashi on פי החירות Exodus 14:2 — where פִּי = שְׁנֵי — and the reference there to the valley between the rocks).

Verse 13

לחוף ימים TOWARDS THE COASTS OF THE SEAS — (לחוף is the same as על חוף): by the shore of the seas will be his land. חוף means "border" as Onkelos has it; old French marche; English border. [והוא לחוף אניות] means he will constantly be at the haven of ships — the port — whither the ships bring merchandise. For Zebulun was engaged in business and provided food for the tribe of Issachar whilst these engaged in the study of the Torah. It is to this that Moses alludes, (Deuteronomy 33:18) "Rejoice Zebulun in thy going out. and Issachar in thy tents", — Zebulun goes forth to trade and Issachar studies the Torah in the tents (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 11; cf. Rashi on Genesis 25:27 ישב אהלים)
וירכתו על צידן AND HIS BORDER SHALL BE UNTO ZIDON — the end of his territory will extend close up to Zidon. ירכתו means his end, as (Exodus 26:22) ולירכתי המשכן "and for the ends of the Tabernacle".

Verse 14

יששכר חמר גרם means ISSACHAR IS A BONY ASS — he bears the yoke of the Torah (i.e. obligations) like a strong ass upon which may be placed a heavy load (Genesis Rabbah 99:9).
רבץ בין המשפתים CROUCHING BETWEEN THE FOLDS — Like an ass that travels day and night and has no permanent stable of its own, so that when it wishes to rest it croucheth down between the borders — i.e. at the bounds of the cities whither it is earring merchandise.

Verse 15

וירא מנחה כי טוב AND HE SAW THAT REPOSE WAS GOOD — He chose (ראה) as his portion a land that was blessed and well-fitted to produce fruits (cf. Onkelos; so that he need not engage overmuch in business.
ויט שכמו לסבול AND HE INCLINED THE SHOULDER TO RECEIVE THE BURDEN namely the burden of tracking the Torah.
ויהי AND BECAME unto all Israel his brethren.
למס עובד A SERVANT UNTO TRIBUTE — deciding for them points of Law and the rules with regard to the fixing of leap-years, as it is said (1 Chronicles 12:32) "And of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred" — two hundred heads of the Sanhedrin he provided — "and all their brethren were at their commandment" (Genesis Rabbah 99:10).
ויט שכמו AND HE INCLINED HIS SHOULDER — he lowered his shoulder; similar are, (2 Samuel 22:10) "He bowed (ויט) the heavens" and (Psalms 78:1) "Incline (הטו) your ear". Onkelos, however, explains it differently: HE BOWED HIS SHOULDER to wage wars and to conquer new districts — for he (Issachar) dwelt on the marches — AND the enemy BECAME subject to him AS A SERVANT TO PAY TRIBUTE.

Verse 16

דן ידין עמו means DAN WILL TAKE VENGEANCE FOR HIS PEOPLE from the Philistines, the phrase having the same meaning as in (Deuteronomy 32:30) "For the Lord will avenge (ידין) his people".

כאחד שבטי ישראל means ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL WILL BE AT ONE with him and he will take vengeance for all of them. This prophecy alludes to Samson (Genesis Rabbah 99:11). One might also explain כאחד שבטי ישראל thus: "[Dan will take vengeance for his people as did] the most distinguished tribe (המיוחד) among the tribes of Israel" — alluding to David who was of the tribe of Judah (Genesis Rabbah 99:11).

Verse 17

שפיפן is another name for a נחש. I am of opinion that it is thus called because it hisses (נושף) when biting. Similarly we have, (Genesis 3:15) "and thou shalt bite (תשיפנו) at their heel" (cf. Rashi thereon). הנשך עקבי סוס THAT BITETH THE HORSE'S HEELS — this is the manner of the serpent. Scripture compares him to a serpent that bites the horse's heels ויפל רכבו אחור THAT HIS RIDER FALLETH BACKWARD without it (the serpent) having touched him at all. We find the analogy to this in the case of Samson with reference to whom this prophecy was made (Judges 16:29): "And Samson took fast hold of the two middle pillars etc." — and those on the roof died though not directly attacked. Onkelos translates נחש by כחיוי חורמן, like the serpent "Churman", which is the name of a kind of serpent the bite of which is incurable. It is the serpent which in Hebrew is called צפעוני. It is called a חורמן because it destroys (חרם) everything. The word וכפיתנא in the Targum means "and like a פתן" (like an asp). יכמון in the Targum means יארוב "he lies in wait".

Verse 18

לישועתך קויתי ה' I HOPE FOR THY AID, O ETERNAL — He prophesied that the Philistines would put out his (Samson's) eyes, and that he would have to say (Judges 16:28) "Remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once etc."

Verse 19

גד גדוד יגודנו GAD, AN ASSAILING TROOP SHALL ASSAIL HIM — all the words in this verse which have, the letters גד are connected in meaning with the word גדוד and so also did Menachem ben Seruk classify them. Should you say, however, that גדוד has always two ד's and these words have only one, the answer is: The word גדוד is a noun and therefore requires two ד's, for it is the way of a biliteral root to have the second letter doubled when used as a noun; the root proper, however, consists only of two letters. Thus it says, (Proverbs 26:2) כצפור לנוד "the wandering sparrow", (לנוד a verb, infinitive) of the same derivation as נדודים in (Job 7:4) "I am full of גדודים wanderings" (a noun); (Judges 5:27) ''there he fell down (שדוד) dead", a noun in meaning, which is of the same derivation as the verb in (Psalms 41:6) "that wasteth (ישוד) at moon-day". So, also, יגודנו,יגוד and גדוד have the same derivation. When, also, one uses such biliteral roots in the future tense Kal, it (the second letter) is not doubled. For example: יגוד he will troop, ינוד he will wander, ירום he will be high, ישוד he will devastate, ישוב he will come back. When, however, such a root is used in a reflexive sense (Hithpael) or in a causative-transitive sense the second letter is doubled Examples are: יתגודד,יתבולל,יתרומם,יתעודד. Examples of the causative-transitive sense are: (Psalms 146:9) "He strengtheneth (יעודד) the fatherless and the widow"; (Isaiah 49:5) "To bring Jacob back (לשובב) to Him"; (Isaiah 48:12) "The restorer (משובב) of paths". The form יגודנו which is used here has not the force that others will make him do something (i.e. it has not this causative-transitive sense with the direct accusative suffix נו) but it means "a troop will troop out from him", exactly the same as (Jeremiah 10:20) בני יצאוני which means "my

children have gone forth from me", (as we might say "have left me"). (Cf. Rashi on Genesis 37:4 דברו לשלום, and on Exodus 15:9. תמלאמו). גד גדוד יגודנו accordingly means, "troops will troop out of him" signifying that they (the Gadites) will cross the Jordan with their brethren, all armed, and remain with them until the land will have been conquered.
והוא יגד עקב means all his troops will return in their own tracks back to their territory which they will receive on the other side of the Jordan and not one of them will be missing.
עקב This means: By the same roads and paths upon which they had traveled shall they return. The word עקב has the same meaning as in (Psalms 128:20) "And thy foot-steps (עקבותיך) were not known"; (Song of Songs 1:8) "by the footsteps (עקבות) of the flock". In old French traces; English, tracks.

Verse 20

מאשר שמנה לחמו OUT OF ASHER COMETH HIS FAT BREAD —The food that will come from the territory of Asher will be fat, for there will be numerous olive-trees in his territory so that it will flow with oil like a fountain. Moses blessed him in a like manner: (Deuteronomy 33:24) "and he will dip his foot in oil". So we learn in the Treatise of Menachot 85b: once the people of Laodicia were in need of oil. Their agent was able to obtain the very large quantity they required only at a city in Asher, having failed at Jerusalem and other cities.

Verse 21

אילה שלחה is symbolical of the valley of Gennesareth which ripens its fruits very quickly, just as a hind runs rapidly (Genesis Rabbah 99:12).
אילה שלחה means A HIND LET LOOSE that it may run where it pleases.
הנותן אמרי שפר Understand this as the Targum does: They (the people of Naphtali) will give thanks to and will praise God for them (for the fruits). Another explanation of the verse is: He prophesied about the war with Sisera, with regard to which Scripture says, (Judges 4:6) "and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali etc." — and they marched thither most rapidly. There, too, is the expression שלח used: (v.15) "into the valley they rushed (שלח) at his feet".
הנתן אמרי שפר HE GIVETH SAYINGS OF PLEASANTNESS — Due to them (to the ten thousand men of Naphtali) Deborah and Barak sang the song of praise (Judges ch. 5). Our Teachers explained the verse as an allusion to what happened on the day when Jacob was buried, when Esau claimed the cave of Machpelah. They were compelled to delay the burial whilst Naphtali ran rapidly back to Egypt and brought the title-deed of the cave etc. as is related in Treatise Sotah 13a. The words in the Targum יתרמי עדביה mean "his lot shall fall", so that the second half of the verse would mean according to the Targum, "he will give thanks for his lot with pleasing words and with praise".

Verse 22

בן פרת means a graceful son. It is an expression used in Aramaic: אפרין נמטיה "Let us treat gracefully (literally, let us make a triumphal procession for) R. Simeon", and may be found at the end of Bava Metzia 119a.
בן פרת עלי עין means his gracefulness attacks the eye that looks at him.
בנות צעדה עלי שור DAUGHTERS TREAD ON THE WALL — The daughters of Egypt used to climb up to gaze at his beauty בנות is plural — many daughters, whilst צעדה is singular, but the words should be translated thus: many daughters climbed, each of them to any place from which she could best obtain a glimpse of him.

עלי שור means for the purpose of looking at him, similar to (Numbers 24:17) I behold him (אשורנו) but not nigh". There are many Midrashic explanations but this inclines nearest to the literal sense of the verse
פרת — The ת in this word is added for elegance of style (i.e. it is not a sign of the feminine), as the ת in דברת which is instead of דבר in (Ecclesiastes 3:18) "It is because of (על דברת) the sons of men".
שור is an infinitive the same as לשור, to look.
עלי שור consequently means in order to look (i.e. עלי, a poetical form of על, means "for the purpose of"). The translation of Onkelos of בנות צעדה עלי שור is: two tribes will come out of his sons etc., and according to this Scripture writes בנות (though one would expect בנים) with reference to the women of Manasseh — the daughters of Zelophehad — who received a portion of land on both sides of the Jordan (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 9). And in accordance with this paraphrase the Targum translated the preceding words בן פרת by ברי דיסגי יוסף, Joseph is a son who shall increase and become, two tribes connecting פרת with the expression [פריה ורביה] "fruitfulness and increase". There are Midrashim (Genesis Rabbah 78:9) that fit in with the text: When Esau came to meet Jacob all the other matriarchs walked in front of their children to prostrate themselves but of Rachel it states (33:7) "[and afterwards] came Joseph near and Rachel (i.e. Joseph before Rachel) and they bowed down". Joseph said, "This wicked man has a haughty look (is bold and impudent) he may set his fancy upon my mother". He therefore stepped in front of her, drawing himself up to his full height, in order to hide her from Esau's eyes. It was in reference to this that his father when blessing him called him a בן פורת, a son who grew in size: You, Joseph, stretched yourself to a great height to protect your mother against Esau's glance, therefore you deserved to become great. (This has reference to the distinguished position he attained in Egypt.).
In accordance with this Midrash the words בנות צעדה עלי שור mean they climbed up to get a good view of you when you went forth in the procession as Viceroy over Egypt. They (the Rabbis) gave a further interpretation of it, taking עלי עין as עוּלֵי עין,"raised above the eye", in the sense that the Evil Eye would have no effect on his children (Berakhot 20a). So, too, when he blessed Manasseh and Ephraim he blessed them, praying that they should become as fishes on which the Evil Eye has no effect.

Verse 23

וימררהו ורבו AND THEY EMBITTERED HIM — His brothers dealt bitterly with him; Potiphar and his wife dealt bitterly with him, putting him into the dungeon. וימררהו is the same metaphor as וימררו וגו' in (Exodus 1:14) "They made their lives bitter (וימררו)" (Genesis Rabbah 98:19).
ורבו means his brothers became his adversaries (literally, men of strife). This verb is not a Kal form meaning they strove (with him) for were it so it should have been punctuated וְרָבוּ (from the root ריב), as in (Numbers 20:13) "These are the waters of Meribah, where the children of Israel strove (רָבוּ)". And even if its meaning were "shooting arrows" (from the root רבה) it would have been punctuated in exactly the same way. It really has a passive force like (Jeremiah 2:12) שֹׁמּוּ שמים "Be astonished, O ye heavens" which is as much as הושמו; and likewise (Job 24:24) "They are exalted (רֹמּוּ) for a little while" which has the same meaning as הורמו except that הורמו and הושמו mean they are made to be exalted and astonished by others, whilst שמו and רמו and רבו denote that the actions arise out of the persons themselves: they make themselves to be astonished, they are exalted of their own accord, רבו means they became men of strife. A similar form is (Isaiah 23:2) "Be still (דֹּמּוּ) ye inhabitants of the isle" where דמו has the same meaning as the Nipal of

דום,נְדָמוּ. In this sense does Onkelos also translate it: ונקמהו "and they avenged themselves on him".
בעלי חצים THE ARCHERS (literally, men who have arrows) — they were so called because their tongues were as arrows (Genesis Rabbah 98:19) (cf. Psalms 120:4). Onkelos translates it (חצים) by פלגותא taking it to be of the same root as המחצה in (Numbers 31:36) "And the half (המחצה) was" thus he takes בעלי חצים to mean "those who were destined to share with him the inheritance".

Verse 24

ותשב באיתן קשתו means his power (i.e. his rule as viceroy) was strongly (באיתן) established.
קשתו means his power.
ויפזו זרעי ידיו — This refers to the placing of the king's signet-ring on his hand, יפזו being connected in meaning with the expression (1 Kings 10:18) זהב מופז "the finest gold", so that the translation would be "his hands were made golden". This happened to him from the hands of (i.e. through the instrumentality of) the Holy One, blessed be He, who is the Mighty One (אביר) of Jacob. From here (from his position as Viceroy) he rose to become the Feeder of the Foundation Stone of the Israelites, i.e. of the Originator of the tribes of Israel (Jacob). The word אבן, stone, has here the same sense as in (Zechariah 4:7) אבן הראשה, "the chief stone", where it denotes high position. Onkelos also translates it in this manner: His translation of the verse is as follows: ותשב he translates by "and the prophecy returned upon (was fulfilled in) them (the brethren) i.e. the prophecy contained in the dreams which he dreamed regarding them was fulfilled, "because he observed the Law in secret" — this is an addition made by Onkelos, having no words in the Hebrew text to correspond to it. "And he put in "The Might his trust" is the translation of the Hebrew words באיתן קשתו. The following is how the wording of the Targum fits in with the Hebrew text: "His prophecy was fulfilled (וְתָשָׁב) because the might (איתן) of the Holy One, blessed be He, served him as his bow (קשתו) and trusty weapon; therefore gold was placed on his arms" — the last words being the Targum of ויפזו זרועי ידיו [לכך], taking ויפזו as connected in meaning with פז, fine gold.
אבן ישראל Onkelos takes אבן as an abbreviation of אב ובן and therefore renders it by אבהן ובנין the fathers and children meaning Jacob and his sons. And our rabbis expounded, AND HE BROUGHT BACK HIS BOW WITH STRENGTH, as being about the suppressing of his impulse with the wife of his master. And it calls it a bow, because the seed shoots out like an arrow.
ויפזו זרעי ידיו AND HIS FOREARMS WERE GILDED (VAYAFOZU) — (is read) like, 'and they were spread' (vayafotsu), since his seed went out from between the fingers of his hands.
מידי אביר יעקב FROM THE HANDS OF THE STRENGTH OF JACOB — As an image of the replica of his father was shown to him, etc., as it is found in Sotah 36b.

Verse 25

מאל אביך means FROM THE GOD OF THY FATHER did this happen to you AND HE WILL HELP YOU also in the future (Genesis Rabbah 87:7).
ואת שדי means AND WITH THE ALMIGHTY was your heart when you did not hearken to the words of your mistress AND therefore HE WILL BLESS YOU.
ברכת שדים ורחם Onkelos renders this by: blessings for father(s) and mother(s) i.e. may the men and the women be blessed in that they may not prove sterile and barren.

שדים BREASTS (SHADAYIM) — "He will surely be cast down" (Exodus 19:13), we translate (in Onkelos) as eeshtedaah yishtedi. Also shadayim here is [to be understood that way,] because the seed shoots out like an arrow.

Verse 26

ברכת אביך גברו וגו' THE BLESSING OF THY FATHER HAVE PREVAILED etc. — The blessings which the Holy One, blessed be He, bestowed upon me are mighty beyond the blessings wherewith He blessed my progenitors
עד תאות גבעות עולם EVEN TO THE BOUNDARIES OF THE EVERLASTING HILLS — Because my blessings have prevailed, extending to the very ends of the bounds of the everlasting hills, for He gave me a blessing that bursts all bounds, one that has no limits, that reaches even unto the four corners of the world, as it is stated, (Genesis 28:14) "[God said to Jacob] and thou shalt spread abroad to the West and to the East [and to the North and to the South]", an unqualified promise that was made neither to Abraham nor to Isaac. For to Abraham He said, (Genesis 13:14) "Lift up thine eyes and look northwards etc. … for all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it", and He showed him only the Land of Israel. To Isaac He said, (Genesis 26:3) "for unto thee and unto thy seed will I give all these lands, and I will establish the oath [which I swore unto Abraham thy father]". It is to this that Isaiah alludes when he said, (Isaiah 58:14) "And I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father" (Shabbat 118b), and he did not say, "with the heritage promised to Abraham".
הורי is from a root meaning to conceive. The singular denotes "my father", the one who made my mother conceive me. We find a similar use of the verb in (Job 3:3) "A man is causing a woman to conceive (הוֹרָה)."
עד תאות means UNTO THE ENDS — The word is connected with the verbs in (Numbers 36:10) "And ye shall mark out the ends (והתאויתם) for the east border", and (Numbers 5:8) "you shall mark out the ends (תתאו) unto the entrance of Hamath".
תאות means in old French émoulis. Thus (i.e. with these words) did Menachem ben Seruk classify it (תאות). Onkelos translates (גבעת) תאות עולם in the sense of desire (תאוה) and longing and takes גבעת as a figurative expression for "the great ones", like (1 Samuel 2:8) "the pillars of the earth", meaning the righteous of the earth — viz., he renders it by "the blessings for which the great ones of the earth longed", referring to the blessings which his mother so much desired that she forced him to take steps to obtain them
תהיין THEY — all — SHALL BE ON THE HEAD OF JOSEPH.
נזיר אחיו means what the Targum has: פרישא דאחוהי. i.e. the one who was separated from his brothers. The word נזיר is of a root signifying separation, as in (Leviticus 22:2) "that they separate themselves (וינזרו) from the holy things of the children of Israel"; (Isaiah 1:4) "they have separated themselves from God (נזרו) turning backward".

Verse 27

בנימן זאב יטרף means BENJAMIN IS A WOLF THAT TEARETH (i.e. "wolf" is not the object of the sentence but the word אשר must be supplied before יטרף). He prophesied that they (Benjamin's descendants) will be "rapacious" in the time to come; thus the Benjamites were told (Judges 21:21) "and catch you every man his wife", as you will find in the story of the concubine of Gibeah. Further he was prophesying concerning Saul (who was of this tribe) who vanquished his enemies on all sides, as it is said (1 Samuel 14:47) "So Saul took the kingdom… and fought on every side… against Moab… and against Edom… and whithersoever he turned himself he put them to the worse".

בבקר יאכל עד IN THE MORNING HE EATETH HIS PREY — עד is an Aramaic word synonymous with the Hebrew words בזה and שלל, prey, which are rendered in the Targum by עדאה; and there is another example of its use in the Hebrew text of the Bible: (Isaiah 33:23) "Then is the prey of great spoil (עד שלל) divided". He (Jacob) says this ("in the morning eateth his prey") with reference to Saul who rose as Israel's champion in the period when Israel began to flourish and shine (i.e. in the morning of his history; indeed some editions have "בקרון", at the morning-dawn of Israel, instead of פרי׳חתן) (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 14).
ולערב יחלק שלל AND AT EVEN HE DIVIDETH THE SPOIL— even after the sun of Israel will have set through Nebuchadnezzar who will exile them to Babel, יחלק שלל HE WILL DIVIDE THE SPOIL, viz., Mordecai and Esther who will be of the tribe of Benjamin will divide the spoil of Haman, as it is said, (Ester 3:7) "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman" (Cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 14). Onkelos translates it as having a reference to the portions which the priests received of the holy sacrifices in the Temple which was situated in the territory of Benjamin.

Verse 28

וזאת אשר דבר להם אביהם ויברך אתם AND THIS IS IT THAT THEIR FATHER SPOKE UNTO THEM WHEN (literally, and) HE BLESSED THEM — But were there not some of his sons whom he did not bless but whom, on the contrary, he reproached? But this is the explanation of these words: and this is it that their father spake unto them, viz., all that has been said above in this chapter, whether it be blessing or reproach. You might therefore think that he did not bless Reuben, Simeon and Levi at all — Scripture therefore states, "and he blessed them" (i.e. the 12 tribes alluded to at the beginning of the verse) which implies all of them. (Pesikta Rabbati 7).
EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS BLESSING — according to the blessing that was to come in future to each and every one. (Cf. Rashi on Genesis 40:5, איש כפתרון חלמו.)
ברך אתם HE BLESSED THEM — It should have said, "every man according to his blessing he blessed him"; why, then does it say "he blessed them"? But since in the blessings he ascribed to Judah personally "the strength of a lion", to Benjamin "the rapacity of a wolf" and to Naphtali "the swiftness of a hind", one might think that he did not include all of them in all the blessings, Scripture therefore states "he blessed them" (i.e. each of them personally and all of them together — extending all the personal blessings to each of them) (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 16; cf. Rashi on Exodus 1:19).

Verse 29

נאסף אל עמי [I AM] TO BE GATHERED UNTO MY PEOPLE — The expression נאסף "gathered" is used here because the souls are taken into a place in heaven where they are to be laid by. אסף in the Hebrew language has sometimes the meaning of "bringing something in to a place where it is to be kept" as e.g., (Judges 19:15) "For there was no man that took them into his house (אסף) [to lodge]"; (Deuteronomy 22:2) "then thou shalt bring it home (ואספתו) into thy house"; (Leviticus 23:39) "when you have taken in (באספכם) the fruit of the land" — which means bringing them in to the barn on account of the rain; (Exodus 23:16) "when thou hast taken in (באספך) thy labours". So, too, the verb אסף used in connection with death always means "bringing in to the place where the souls are to be laid by".
אל אבתי means with my fathers.

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

ויאסף רגליו means HE BROUGHT HIS FEET into the bed. (Rashi tells us that ויאסף signifies הכניס, he brought in).
ויגוע AND HE EXPIRED — but the word death is not mentioned in his case, and our Teachers therefore said: (Taanit 5b) "Jacob, our father, is not dead".

Chapter 50

Verse 1

Verse 2

לחנט את אביו TO EMBALM HIS FATHER — Embalming is a matter of using a mixture of aromatic spices.

Verse 3

וימלאו לו [AND FORTY DAYS] WERE FULFILLED — They (the physicians) completed the days of embalming until forty days were completed for him.
ויבכו אתו מצרים שבעים יום AND THE EGYPTIANS WEPT FOR HIM THREESCORE AND TEN DAYS — viz., forty days during the period of embalming and thirty more days for mourning. They wept for him during so long a period because a blessing had come to them on his arrival in Egypt for the famine then ceased and the waters of the Nile again increased (Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 26).

Verse 4

Verse 5

אשר כריתי לי means according to its plain sense "[the grave] which I have digged" just as (Exodus 21:33) "If a man shall dig (יכרה)". There is a Midrashic explanation (Sotah 13a) which fits in with a meaning of the word כריתי, viz., אשר כריתי means אשר קניתי "which I have bought". For R. Akiba said, "when I went to the coast-towns I heard them use for what we term מכירה "trading" the term כירה (Rosh Hashanah 26a). Another Midrashic explanation takes כריתי to be connected with כרי a piled up heap of grain, for Jacob had taken all the silver and gold which he had brought from the house of Laban and made a pile of it and said to Esau, "Take this for your share in the cave" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 6).

Verse 6

כאשר השביעך ACCORDING AS HE ADJURED THEE — For except for that oath I would not permit you to do so. He did not dare, however, to say to Joseph, "Break the oath", lest he might retort, "Then, I, too, may break the oath I made you that I will never reveal that secret about the Sacred Tongue, viz., that I possess a knowledge of it in addition to the seventy languages which you also understand but of which you have no knowledge at all — as it is related in Treatise Sotah 36b.

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

גרן האטד THE THRESHING FLOOR OF ATAD — It was so called because it was surrounded by a hedge of (אטדין) thorns (not because thorns were threshed there) Our Rabbis explained that it was so called in consequence of an incident that occurred there — that all the kings of Canaan and the princes of Ishmael came to wage war against them, but as soon as they saw Joseph's crown hanging over Jacob's coffin they all rose and hung their crowns on it and thus wreathed it with crowns like a threshing floor that is surrounded with a hedge of thorns (Sotah 13a).

Verse 11

Verse 12

כאשר צום AS HE COMMANDED THEM — What was it that he had commanded them? This you can gather from the next verse,

Verse 13

וישאו אותו בניו AND HIS SONS BORE HIM — His sons and not his grandsons. For thus, indeed, he had commanded them: "My bier shall not be borne by an Egyptian, nor by one of your sons because they are children of Canaanite women, but you alone shall bear it He likewise assigned them their positions, namely, three on the east-side and an equal number on the other three sides of the bier. In the same order in which later on the camps marched through the wilderness bearing their several banners they were arranged here. But the 12 tribes that formed these four divisions did not include Levi or Joseph, for Jacob had said, "Levi shall not carry my bier because he is destined to carry the holy Ark; Joseph shall not carry it because he is a king, but Manasseh and Ephraim shall take their places". And, it is to this that Scripture refers when it says, (Numbers 2:2) "every man [shall pitch] by his own banner according to the signs" — meaning according to the sign (i.e. indication of position) which their father individually gave them with regard to carrying his bier (Midrash Tanchuma, Bamidbar 12).

Verse 14

הוא ואחיו וכל העלים אתו HE AND HIS BRETHREN AND ALL THAT WENT UP WITH HIM — here, speaking of their return to Egypt, it mentions his brothers before the Egyptians who went with him whereas when speaking of their journey to Canaan to bury their father it mentions the Egyptians before his brothers, as it is said, (Genesis 50:7) "and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh …" and afterwards it states (Genesis 50:8) "and all the house of Joseph and his brothers". But the explanation is: because they (the Egyptians) saw how much respect the kings of Canaan paid to Jacob by hanging their crowns on his coffin they now treated them (the sons) with much respect and gave them precedence on the return journey (Sotah 13a).

Verse 15

ויראו אחי יוסף כי מת אביהם AND WHEN JOSEPH S BRETHREN SAW THAT THEIR FATHER WAS DEAD — What is the meaning of "and they saw"? They could perceive that he was dead through the conduct of Joseph. Previously they used to dine at Joseph's table and he used to receive them with open arms out of respect to his father; after Jacob's death, however, he no longer treated them in a friendly manner (Tanchuma Yashan 2:1:2; Genesis Rabbah 100:8).
לו ישטמנו means PERHAPS HE WILL HATE US. The word has many different meanings. There are examples of לו used to denote a petition, having the meaning of "Oh that!" as for instance: (Genesis 30:34) "Would (לו) it might be according to thy word"; (Genesis 23:13) "Oh that thou wouldst (לו) only hear me"; (Joshua 7:7) "Would that (לו) we had been content"; (Numbers 14:2) "Would that (לו) we had died".,There are examples of לו used in the sense of "if" and "אולי" as, (Deuteronomy 32:29) "If (לו) they were wise [they would understand this]"; (Isaiah 48:18) "If (לוא) thou wouldst hearken to my commandments, [then would thy peace be as a river]"; (2 Samuel 18:12) "If (לו) I would receive [a thousand pieces of silver] in my hands, [yet would I not put forth my hand etc.]". There is an example of לו used in the sense of "perhaps", — in our verse — "Perhaps he will hate us", but there is no other example of its usage in this sense in Scripture. Here it corresponds in sense with the word אולי, "perhaps", as for example in (Genesis 24:5) "אולי the woman will not be willing to follow me" which means "perhaps she will not etc." As a matter of fact אולי has all the meanings of לו, for there are examples of אולי denoting a petition as for instance (2 Samuel 16:12) "Perhaps (אולי) the Lord will look upon mine eye", (where the context shows that this involves a kind of petition that God should do this); (Joshua 14:12) "Perhaps (אולי) the Lord will be with me [and I shall drive them out]", (involving also a petition that God should do this), where אולי has a similar meaning to לו in (Genesis 30:34) "Would (לו) it might be according to thy word". Then again the word אולי has the meaning of "if"; for example, (Genesis 18:24) "Perhaps (אולי) there are fifty righteous [wilt Thou destroy etc.]" (which is equivalent to "if there are fifty… wilt thou destroy?".)

Verse 16

ויצוו אל יוסף AND THEY COMMANDED SOME TO GO TO JOSEPH — The words ויצוו אל have the same meaning as in (Exodus 6:13) "and He gave them a charge unto (ויצום אל) the children of Israel", which signifies, "He commanded Moses and Aaron to act as messengers to the children of Israel", and this verse, too, means they charged the man whom they sent that he should act as their messenger to Joseph to speak to him as follows (the words לומר

כן לו correspond to לאמר in the Bible text here). And who was it that they so charged? The sons of Bilhah who had been accustomed to associate with him, as it is said (Genesis 37:12) "When a lad he used to be with the sons of Bilhah" (Tanchuma Yashan 2:1:2).
אביך צוה THY FATHER DID COMMAND — They altered the facts (they stated something that was false) for the sake of peace, for Jacob had given them no such command because Joseph was not suspect in his sight (Yevamot 65b)).

Verse 17

שא נא לפשע עבדי אלהי אביך NOW, PRAY, FORGIVE THE TRESSPASS OF THE SERVANTS OF THE GOD OF THY FATHER — After having repeated to Joseph the words which his brothers stated had been their fathers message, "forgive thy brothers' sin" the messengers were to add as a petition of the brothers "Now, pray etc.", meaning "If you will not forgive them although they are your brothers, forgive them because they are the servants of the God of thy father", implying though your father be dead, his God still lives and they are his servants.

Verse 18

וילכו גם אחיו AND HIS BRETHREN ALSO WENT in addition to sending their messengers.

Verse 19

כי התחת אלהים אני FOR AM I INSTEAD OF GOD — Am I perhaps (do you think that I am) in His stead? The ה of התחת expresses a question. Even if I wished to do you harm would I at all be able to do so? For did you not all design evil against me, and you did not succeed because the Holy One, blessed be He, designed it for good. How, then, can I alone, without God's consent, do evil to you.

Verse 20

Verse 21

וידבר אל לבם means HE SPOKE words that found ready entrance INTO THEIR HEART: Before you came down hither people spread rumours about me that I was born a slave; through you it became public that I am a free-man by birth. If I were to kill you what would people say? "He saw a party of fine young men and he prided himself on his relationship with them, saying "These are my brothers", but afterwards he killed them. Have you ever heard of a man killing his brothers?!" (Genesis Rabbah 100:9) Another interpretation is: He said to them, "Ten lights could not extinguish one light; how, then, can one light extinguish ten lights?" (Megillah 16b).

Verse 22

Verse 23

על ברכי יוסף [WERE BORN] ON JOSEPH'S KNEES — The meaning is as the Targum gives it: He brought them up upon his knees.

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28